

FAITH IN TIME OF WAR

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PREFACE

THIS book has been written in a few weeks, and will no doubt be found to bear marks of its hasty production. There has been no moment of the time spent upon it when the writer had not been conscious of the war. Yet it is not a book "about the war." It does not presume to offer any advice on topics which are outside the experience and vocation of the writer. It only concerns itself with the faith which Christian people have, or might have, in the midst of war. As is natural, it turns for encouragement to the stores of Christian Revelation and Christian Tradition, but it tries to relate that encouragement to the needs of to-day. Relevance to such needs is essential if faith is to be of any use to men, but religion is much more than journalism. The news of the day, good or bad, is never the last word. The surface ground-temperature, high or low, is never the whole truth. Yet now is the time when we need all the strength that is available. A reminder of "the things that cannot be shaken" may help in the task of reaching victory, and in the greater and harder task of using victory aright.

S. C. CARPENTER.

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SOME "MOUNTAINS"

THE army of those who believe or wish to believe in God is being heavily bombarded. Not any more than usual—indeed, not so much—by argument, but by the pressure of events. Things are occurring which make it difficult for all, and, as it seems, impossible for some, to hold on to an effective faith. This is the main and by far the most general impediment: the things that are occurring.

There are, of course, certain ancient and classical problems which are still with us, problems which cause some sensitive minds to feel honourable scruples. It seems to them audacious for man to draw the sublime conclusion of belief in God. And there have been at least since the eighteenth century, some who have seen in religion the enemy of freedom. It may fairly be added that this particular identification has lately become much less plausible, because new brutalities have arisen which have stamped on both religion and freedom with indiscriminating hate. Religion is now freedom's only friend. Yet old prejudices and ignorant catchwords die hard.

Others have fallen victims to philosophical difficulties of a more modern kind. A few are what is called Behaviourists, or, more generally, Determinists. Others consider that all life can be explained in terms of economic materialism. All these systems of thought exclude the idea of God. They are "Humanist," which really means sub-human, in much the same way as

"Humanitarianism" really means treating dogs and cats as more important than human beings. These attacks have likewise faded out under pressure of news from the front.

The attacks which these systems make on Christianity, being of a scientific and philosophical kind, still have whatever logical force they ever had. In point of fact, they can all be met by Christian thinkers, but a small book like this is not the place in which to engage on those laborious and complicated tasks.

Our object is more modest, and, if it is to any extent attained, more likely to be useful to the plain man. The plain man is not a professional gladiator of unbelief. Nor does he listen much to the professional demonstrations of either unbelief or belief. He is simply a well-meaning person who finds in the contemporary world a number of things by which he is puzzled and depressed. That is the situation to-day—multitudes in the valley, *not of decision*, as Joel saw them—they have not reached that point—but of hesitation. Our object is to attempt to understand and relieve the doubts of those who say, "How can you ask us to believe in God when things are happening as they are?" to suggest in fact that, even in the valley, the Day of the Lord, as Joel said, is near.

Let us try to analyse this reluctance to believe. One form of it is very crude. At a simple and superficial level of intelligence people say, "Why does not God stop the war?" This apparently means, "Why does not God make His will known to the world by means of a 'miracle', or at least in a way so convincing and so universal that everybody will at once acknowledge and obey it?" There are two answers to this. One is that in the history

of the world God has never done anything like that. The other is that the evidence of religion, and especially of the Christian religion, forbids us to expect that God ever would do anything like that. There is therefore no reason whatever, either on historical or religious grounds, to entertain the idea.

We are accordingly forced back on to something in the nature, or at all events in the conduct, of mankind. We shall see very soon that this reaches up to the region of belief in God again, but for the moment let us look at man. Why it is that man, who as a rule believes vaguely, or anyhow would like to believe, in God, constantly acts in such a way to make it hard for others, and even for himself, to do so? It is a baffling question, and in asking it we cannot get rid of the difficulty about God, for behind it there lies another even harder to answer: What is the relation between God the Creator and these disappointing phenomena in man? And that really means: How far must God be held responsible? It is plainly not enough to say that the troubles of the world are man's doing and that God is in no sense responsible, and to leave it at that, if it remains the fact that man's nature is ultimately the gift of God. Why, why does God allow so much evil to be done?

There is in human affairs another, more trivial-seeming problem, which is more easily soluble, and the solution of it points in the direction of what is desired for the greater problem. It is the problem of the personal appearance of men and women. Those who walk about the streets of London (or any other place) sometimes wonder why God has created so many ugly people. Believers in democracy, if they happen to be at all fastidious in their judgment of faces, are liable to be

offended by the outward appearance of those who share with them the spiritual glory of citizenship. It is a shock, but presently, if they are genuine democrats, they are reassured by reflecting that a large part of the ugliness of their fellow-citizens is due to the fact that democracy has hitherto been very imperfectly established. For of all the possible causes for human ugliness, three at least would be removed or diminished under a thoroughly democratic system. Sometimes it is caused by ill-health, sometimes by lack of physical amenities, especially healthful exercise, in youth, and sometimes, though more rarely, by excessive indulgence of some kind. Under a truly democratic way of life, in which common interests were held paramount and all cared for all, ill-health would be greatly lessened, good homes and adequate facilities for recreative exercise would be generally available, and though over-indulgence might not be stamped out, the opportunities for it, in a world where none would be too poor and none would be too rich, would be limited. Now, all these ugliness-producing causes are human: Bad housing, stuffy bedrooms, lack of playing-fields, and the sins of gluttony or drunkenness do not occur by any act of God. True, there are certain kinds of ill-health which seem to be "sent", and certain diseases which, in the present state of science, seem incurable. But it is, in point of fact, observable that those who suffer in this way often acquire a peculiar facial beauty. Unmerited suffering, patiently borne, brings its own dignity, its own sweetness. And as for those faces which simply happen to be ugly, not from any shortage of bedrooms, bathrooms or cricket-fields, nor from viciousness, but from sheer irregularity of feature, it is the fact that ugliness of that kind is often attractive.

It appears then that ugliness, especially that of a repellent kind, is very often traceable to the misdoings of mankind. It is not the act of God. And where it does look like the act of God, it constantly has compensations. Even where the compensations are not very obvious, at least it gives variety to the population. We cannot all resemble Adonis. For myself, I do not want to. Least of all should I want to if everybody else were equally beautiful. Variety is the sauce of life. If, as seems not impossible, the giraffe and the toucan are jokes of the Creator, they are very good jokes.

This may seem trivial, but it points in the true direction. Before we echo the bold indictment of the divine justice, which is contained in the ironic prayer of Omar Khayyam:

For all the sins wherewith the Face of Man
Is blackened, Man's Forgiveness give—and take!

we must examine more carefully man's own part in the production of the chaos.

What are the things which must be accounted for? The thing that most of all affronts the conscience of mankind is War. There was a time when war, always waged by small professional armies, did not seriously interrupt the life of the world, except to the country where it was being fought. Gibbon, the historian, writing in 1781, before the French Revolution and Napoleon, could comfort himself with the reflection that "the European forces are exercised by temperate and undecisive contests," which did, he thought, little harm, but served to keep alive the manly spirit of the civilised peoples.¹ Even so, in spite of the horrifying nature of

¹ I owe this reference to Gilbert Murray, *The Ordeal of this Generation*, 1928, p. 202.

modern war and the extent to which it has become "totalitarian," there are some nations which have been hypnotised into believing that war is a good thing, the necessary exercise of a strong nation. But this seems to the British peoples an evil madness. No one in Great Britain or in the Dominions believes that war is anything but a curse, a relic of barbarism, a destroyer of wealth and happiness, the enemy of the good, the beautiful, the true. We believe, as we have shewn quite plainly, that there are challenges to freedom which must in the last resort be met, even at the frightful cost of war. But it is a hateful entanglement in the meshes of a hateful thing. How is it that the curse has once more enveloped us?

There will be little doubt among the readers of this book about the magnitude of the responsibility of Adolf Hitler. It is indeed part of the charge which is made against God that He has permitted such an appalling mass of world-wrecking dynamite to be controlled by one man. To this we return later. In the meantime, what other causes are there?

We need not stay long over the political reasons which lie in the history of the past. Events which have happened cannot now be undone. The 1918 Election was a moral scandal, from which Parliament has hardly yet recovered. The continuance of the blockade after the war caused misery in Germany and bitter resentment against the blockaders, but the British people did not understand at that time what it involved. The Treaty of Versailles was not savage, as such treaties go. It was much more generous than any treaty which a victorious Germany would have imposed on conquered Allies. It was, in fact, incomparably more generous than the treaty which the Germans did actually enforce on

conquered Russia at Brest-Litovsk. It contained some things which we can now see to have been errors of judgment, chiefly the absence of provision for its own amendment in years to come.

This points to one of the main reasons for national self-reproach. We are politically unintelligent and indolent. We do not take the trouble to find out what is happening. In the nineteenth century citizens took Parliament seriously, and read the Parliamentary debates, and the heroes of popular esteem were those who were guiding the State. Since then it has come to pass that Parliament is taken much less seriously. It occupies less space in the Press and in the national mind, and the popular heroes have been the athlete, the boxer, the comedian and the film-star. This has caused us to lose our grip. The conscious desires are probably better, and the Jingoism is much less blatant than in the era of Lord Palmerston, but we do not cause the national policy to express what in our best moments we really desire.

Thus, we were pledged to support China against Japan in 1931. It was pointed out to us that action would affect our Eastern trade, and, in spite of the verdict of the committee over which Lord Lytton presided, we did nothing. A little later, public opinion, rising up unexpectedly but unmistakably, declined to accept the Hoare-Laval proposals for the partition of Abyssinia. In Czecho-Slovakia we verbally supported the democratic government of that country, but in effect we let it go to its fate. We had failed to apply to public action the moral standards by which private action is as a rule controlled. There was nothing "militarist" about this, and nothing directly cruel or oppressive. In fact, its

motive was a very strong desire for peace. But it encouraged the growth of the war-spirit elsewhere.

Even more serious is it that we have all accepted the fatal principle that the foreign policy of a government is to promote national ends. Our representatives have uttered high-sounding sentiments about international obligations. They were not insincere, and the audience, without any conscious hypocrisy, applauded. But the ends pursued by statesmen of all nations nearly always put national advantage first, and if statesmen acted otherwise they would not remain in office. Conduct which could not, and would not, be defended in private life, is praised as a "diplomatic victory." This vitiates international politics through and through, and produces the highly combustible raw material of war. Where in all this is the direct responsibility of God? There is none. It is the act of man.

The other main offences are Unemployment and Poverty. Here, again, unthinking people say, "It is all very well to tell us to love one another, but there is not enough to go round." It is nonsense. There is plenty to go round. God has not failed. Seed-time and harvest do not cease. The whole population of the earth could be fed, clothed, housed, kept in health, amused and educated out of what God gives us from the earth. It is at the human end, in using and distributing the products, that the failure comes. It is a tragedy that "God's plenty" should ever be man's starvation. The aim of human statesmanship—as of private conduct—should always be to maintain, and, where it is necessary, to restore, the benevolent purpose of Providence.

This means planning, a wise use of raw material, and care taken over distribution. Twenty years ago there

was trouble in the coal industry. There was a suggestion of a pool, to counteract the inequalities of the mines. A very eminent politician, when the inequality was mentioned in his hearing, said, "Oh, but that's Providence." What he meant was that it could not be helped. But perhaps all the time it was a challenge of Providence to men, to stimulate them to "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ."

Does this not point towards a solution of the main problem? It is the ancient Christian doctrine—it is even older than Christianity, because it is found in the Hebrew scriptures—that God has created little gods. "I have said," cries Jehovah to the judges of the earth, in Psalm lxxxii, "ye are gods; and ye are all the children of the most Highest." This is only a vicegerency, exercised in their capacity as judges. It does not carry any divine or more than human status. The next verse says, "But ye shall die like men." Yet while they live they have a certain measure of control. It is the ancient orthodox doctrine of Free Will.

How much does it amount to? The state of creatorship has been illustrated—so far as a divine and therefore unparalleled capacity can be illustrated by any human analogy—by comparison with the human imagination. The only human tasks which are ever spoken of as creative are those in which the imagination takes a part. In letters and the arts a man is said to create. Perhaps the most illuminating field of comparison is that of the imaginative writer. Shakespeare begins the first scene of the first act of a tragedy. He does not know exactly how it will end. As he proceeds, Macbeth, Romeo, Hamlet, Lear, Othello grow under his hand. They develop, not always as Shakespeare might want them to

develop, but as his profound knowledge of human nature teaches him that they must develop. Another slighter but very instructive case is the remarkable development in the character of Mr Pickwick. These are illustrations of the divine method.

To carry the argument a little further, two extracts from a recent novel express two points of view. A doctor, who clearly has the sympathy of the writer, though he is not her spokesman, says

I'm—what's loosely called—a free thinker, but if I be lieved in a God who cared for His people I should say that He was going to purge His universe with fire. Only the argument rather falls to the ground when one realises that the innocent perish with the guilty. One might, of course, and with reason, add that there are no innocent. But I still confess to admitting that a few saints remain to leaven the lump, and I'm inclined to regard the butchery of young children as being a little high handed.

On another page a woman, who seems to say what the writer herself thinks, puts out a more interesting, more imaginative view.

The Almighty is taking considerable trouble with us. He's let us have our heads, and I've a notion He'll save us by allowing us the advantages of self discipline. It's our last chance, and we can't come to it by any way but this. The fight against evil has got to be carried into every home. This "crusade" of ours doesn't mean that our swords are kept exclusively for the people over the water.¹

All this suggests that the true view of life is one which regards it as a co-operation between God and man. This is, in fact, the Christian view. A once popular theory, known as Deism, asserts that God created the

¹ *The Asses Bridge* by Barbara Goolden

players and set them on the board and then left them to play by themselves. Another theory, Calvinism, pictures the Creator making every move Himself in accordance with a predetermined plan. A third supposes that there is no Creator, but that the pieces move either as they will, or as, for some unexplained reason, they must. The Christian view is that of a bi-lateral but not necessarily equi-lateral partnership. The nearest human parallel to it is either education or the kind of healing into which there enters an element of what is generally called spiritual. In education there is a teacher and a class. The best of teachers, giving the best of lessons, will not succeed unless there is in the class willingness to co-operate. How much is the share of the teacher and how much of the class? Who can say? It is both all the time. So in healing there is something that issues from the healer, and there is something that issues from the patient in response. The healing will not happen unless both are in action.

The one great strain that faith is pledged to take is that of acknowledging that God *allows* war, unemployment, poverty, my disappointments, your unhappiness, his early death, her painful, incurable disease. At the present moment the chief strain is that of accepting the fact that God has allowed Adolf Hitler to control 80,000,000 people, and to have the power of inflicting incalculable suffering on a far greater number. There is, frankly, in this much that is at present insoluble. But the short views, which are all that we can take, are not long enough to enable us to judge aright. When at the end of the eighteenth century, France blazed into revolution, most Englishmen agreed with Burke that hell had broken loose. When the revolution had been

succeeded by the military despotism of Napoleon, and when he began to conquer Europe, he was denounced as a monster of iniquity. Time shewed that the supposed hell of the Revolution had only been a purgatory, and Napoleonism, tyranny as it was, yet proved, as Professor Dover Wilson has remarked:

a very necessary stage in the development of modern Europe. It was the tramp of the invader which did more than anything else to awake sleeping nationalism all over the Continent, it was before the roar of Napoleon's cannon that the artificial boundaries which had divided peoples crumbled to dust. Napoleon cleared the ground, and even did something towards laying the foundations of the great modern Nation-States, Germany and Italy.¹

The long view envisages more of the truth than can be seen at the time. And that long view is only attainable through some kind of faith, through borrowing, or somehow procuring access to, the knowledge that God may be supposed to have. The fact is that even the "long view" is not adequate. "Wait, and you will see" is not the whole story. We know that it is often possible to keep a good heart in time of trouble, when others condole with you or perhaps laugh at you, by reminding yourself that you know what they do not know. The trouble is considerable, yes, but it does not touch you where you live. The real centre of your being is unshaken by it. Theologians speak of seeing things *sub specie aeternitatis*, that is, with the eyes of God. That does not mean merely forecasting what is to come. It involves knowing the past, the present and the future in the completeness of their relevance. It means knowing things as they really are. This in its completeness is an

¹ *The War and Democracy*, 1915, p. 31

infinite task. It is impossible for any but the Infinite Mind to have relations with all creation—(to say "all creation" is not extravagant, because something that someone did in China centuries ago may have an effect on what is happening to me now)—but it is possible to build up a store of faith which has some power of interpreting the things that happen, and thus is able to recognise the meaning of some difficult event or series of events. This is what St. John means when he affirms that:

This is life eternal, that they should know thee the only true God, and him whom thou didst send, even Jesus Christ (St. John xvii, 3).

To have this is to have access to the divine interpretation of events.

There is an old fable, told in *Gesta Romanorum*, that great storehouse of anecdote for mediæval preachers, of a hermit who had observed with indignation the cruelties and inequalities of life. He abandoned his vocation and went into the world. To save his soul, an angel was sent to go with him. The angel did strange things. Enjoying the hospitality of a friendly soldier, he rose in the night and strangled the host's sleeping infant. The ex-hermit was horrified, but held his peace. The next night they lodged elsewhere, and the angel stole a gold cup. The ex-hermit still said nothing. In the morning, when they set out, they came to a bridge. A pilgrim met them, and they asked the way. He turned to direct them, and the angel took him unawares and flung him into the river. His companion could bear it no longer. "I will travel with you no more," he cried; "I commend you to God." "Dear friend," the angel

said, "first hear me and then go your way. These were the reasons for my strange acts. The father was once a man of generous charity, but when the boy was born he became covetous in order to enrich the child, of whom he was inordinately fond. His distress has turned him back to his old way of life. The cup was the property of a once abstemious man. But he took such pleasure in drinking from his gold cup that he had become a drunkard. He has now recovered his old sobriety. The pilgrim was a good man, who would in a short time have fallen into mortal sin. He was saved from this by death, and he will hereafter reign in celestial glory." The hermit, on hearing this, returned to his hermitage and resumed his pious hermit-life.

Now, clearly we cannot know things on this scale, any more than one of the spectators or one of the victims of the fall of the Bridge of San Luis Rey could have had the knowledge about all concerned which Mr. Thornton Wilder assumes for the purpose of his book. But a living faith in the living God, fortified by a long-continued habit of seeking guidance, and of feeling and expressing gratitude when guidance seems to have been given, discloses something of the way in which Providence orders the world. Just because you have before now recognised the hand of God and also because you know how much is left to your own initiative, and how sadly you could wreck, or even have wrecked, the beneficent purpose which you ascribe—if you are what is called a Theist—to the Creator, you can understand at least in part how it is that God has been willing to take the risk of creating Adolf Hitler.

The risk was certainly very great. For if we suppose it to be assumed, as I should be willing to affirm, that

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both war and dictatorship are detestable, neither of the two results to which Hitler has led can be imagined to be part of the divine purpose of the world. On the other hand, it will probably be conceded that it is good for a nation to have a prophet. We recall such words as:

Thou spakest sometime in vision unto thy saints, and saidst: I have laid help upon one that is mighty; I have exalted one chosen out of the people (Psalm lxxxix, 20).

We also remember that Nazism has done much for Germany. It is good to give hope and confidence to a despairing people, to produce employment, to unite social classes, to commend a virile way of life. These things were in fact bought at too dear a price. The confidence was in "ourselves," the employment and the union of classes were, or at least were used, for a controversial end, the work of preparation for war. The virility took a cruel turn. But it need not have been so. The original possibility of the better carried with it the possibility of the worse. Likewise the possibility of the worse carried that of the better. There is a picture which seems implicit in the true idea of Creation. It is not one of the Creator determining everything. Nor is it of a Creator reduced to wondering what His creation will do. It is one of a Creator long-sighted enough and patient enough to take the risk of permitting His creatures to find, in the course of generations, centuries, millennia, the Way of Education in the grace and truth of Christ.

Let us try to face honestly all the implications of this. It is no trifle. Even to read or hear at a distance the story of the bombing of a village—a constant incident of modern warfare—is so piercing, arouses so much compassion and so much indignation, that an arraignment

of the divine justice is often hard to restrain. The appeal is natural in the circumstance. Whenever man is deeply moved he calls upon God. In a crisis, if he has any piety, he prays. When he is angered, at least if he is one of the vulgar and illiterate people who are ignorant of the real resources of their native tongue, he gives way to profanity. He does not mean it, but he is strongly moved, and he does not know how else to express himself. When his compassion and his sense of justice are aroused, he says, "Why does God permit this?"

The reply to that is twofold. It is first of all that it is a result of the way in which, as it seems, the Creator is very slowly and very patiently educating the world. As the Grand Inquisitor in *The Brothers Karamazor* saw clearly, the easy way, the way a great many human beings would themselves have preferred, would have been the way of Miracle, Mystery and Authority. But instead of that there has been put before man what the Inquisitor called the fatal gift, in reality the sublime gift, of freedom.

The second part of the reply is that all the things of which we are sure stand fast. Success and failure are temporary, circumstantial things. The things which rest on eternal truth abide. Even though homes are destroyed, it remains a good thing that there should be homes and that homes should not be destroyed. Even though evil passions are let loose and the beast rises to the surface, it remains a true thing that love is better than hatred, justice than injustice. The real values all stand fast. They are even set in higher relief by the collapse of many of the material circumstances which more or less buttressed them. We all know that a man proves the value of his friends when he is in trouble. Human

friendship is one—a rather easily verifiable example—of the gifts of God. Other gifts, love, justice, truth, and the like, are less immediately tangible. To be surrounded by friends is quite obviously a comfort. The gain of being on the side of truth lies much less on the surface. It requires effort to be comforted by it. But it is a much deeper thing. It lasts longer, and it could comfort even if no human friends appeared. Even death is swallowed up in the victory of truth. If, in spite of all that has happened since, M. Reynaud was right when he said on May 16, 1940—

We are full of hope. Our lives count for nothing. One thing alone counts—the preservation of France.

—if that is true, then freedom for all the sons and daughters of God, in all lands, including Germany, to develop into whatever God means them to be, is the greatest thing of all. The emergence of the spirit of Antichrist only calls attention to the necessity for it, and provides the danger-laden atmosphere in which it can be tested, and can prevail.

It will be observed that almost nothing has yet been said of any of the specifically Christian answers to the problems of faith. All that has been done is to suggest, in a preliminary way, that the indignant expostulations of Job, while they never can be precisely answered, need never have been launched.

CHAPTER TWO

HEBREW FAITH

CHRISTIANITY is frankly and unashamedly a Bible religion. Christian beliefs about God, about God's purpose for the world, and about the nature and calling of man, are derived from the Bible. Christians are rightly accustomed to measure the value of novel doctrines by the Bible. Are they or are they not in harmony with the revelation that is there contained? It will not do simply to argue as was once argued by an enthusiastic but narrow-minded Moslem soldier about the value of a famous library. "These books," he said, "either contain the same teaching as the Koran, in which case they are unnecessary, or they contradict the Koran, in which case they are erroneous. Let them all be burned." The comparison is not so simple as all that. What is meant by measuring new doctrines against the Bible is this: Not everything in the Bible is decisive, or even acutely relevant. Much of it may be neglected. Some must be set aside as due to an inadequate understanding by human minds of the divine purpose. Yet there is a faith for which the Bible stands. The Bible contains the revelation of the Living God, the God who acts, who has a purpose for the world and carries it forward in what men call history. It may happen that a scientific philosopher, through his contemplation of the stars in their courses, the history of mankind, "a yellow primrose by the river's brim," or, in more

abstract terms, the nature of reality as he sees it, may reach some new and interesting conclusions about God. Let it be assumed that he has scientifically proved his point. The Christians have no intention of doubting it. It is agreed, at least until further evidence is forthcoming, that space is curved, that it is swiftly expanding but is not infinite, that the action of electrons is not determined, or whatever it may be.

Let us further suppose that the philosophic conclusion of some thinker is that we are bound to postulate "God" as the necessary ground of thought, the ultimate harmony and concretion of reality, or some other logical inference of an abstract kind. This may be sound and true. If it seems to him to be such, the sensible Christian will not dream of denying it. Nor will he even put it aside as unnecessary. He will welcome it as a scientific statement of reality. But he will not take the conception of God which is expressed or implied in it as a substitute for his own Bible conception, any more than Thomas Aquinas drew the material for his prayers and hymns from Aristotle. Aristotle believed in God because his methodical mind could not rest without that in which all things ultimately meet. The Schoolmen, those very able Christian thinkers of the thirteenth century, deliberately borrowed the Aristotelian methods of philosophy, but they harnessed them to their own Bible-inspired convictions. In other words, what interested them was not only the logical analysis of "That in which," but understanding of the revealed character of "One in whom." They were sure, much surer than most modern Christians are, that the Being of God could be demonstrated by logical proof. Taking nothing for granted, they ascended by what are called ontological

methods of belief. But their knowledge of the character of God they learned from Revelation. The God of their worship was God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. One of the great disciples and admirers of St. Thomas Aquinas imagines himself to be crying out to St. Peter in Paradise:

I in one God believe,
One sole eternal Godhead, of whose love
All heaven is moved, himself unmoved the while.
Nor demonstrations physical alone,
Or more intelligential and abstruse,
Persuades me to this faith but from that truth
It cometh to me rather, which is shed
Through Moses, the rapt Prophets, and the Psalms;
The Gospel, and what ye yourselves did write,
When ye were gifted of the Holy Ghost.
In three eternal Person I believe;
Essence threefold and one; mysterious league
Of union absolute, which, many a time,
The word of Gospel lore upon my mind
Imprints.¹

With Thomas Aquinas and Dante Alighieri as our tutors, we need not be ashamed of turning back to the Bible to learn about faith, or of saying that the Bible is the best handbook for 1940.

If we do turn back to it, we are struck at once by the extraordinarily robust quality of the Bible faith in God. Every one believes. At first it is crude. Abraham was the one man of his generation to struggle out of the barbarous persuasion that heaven demanded the sacrifice of an only son. But he held on to his difficult spiritual notion of God so stoutly that he became a pioneer of what grew eventually to be a universal enlightenment.

¹ Dante, *Paradiso*, xxiv, 128-142

His rejection of the current cruel theology was the beginning of the ethical religion and of the respect for human personality which have produced and preserved such civilisation as we have had, and which will yet save mankind. Moses, to whom there was given a true Revelation, the utmost in quantity and quality that he was competent to receive, built up the fabric of the Hebrew nation on the foundation of belief in the national God. The belief was at that time frankly national. Jehovah was stronger than the rival gods, and His concern was not merely with tithes and sacrifices, but with moral conduct, but He did not reign alone. Joshua held—he was happily not able to carry his creed into effect—that the cause of Jehovah would be served by the total extermination of the Canaanites. But they all believed. And they all believed in Jehovah. Even Jeroboam, the maker of the golden calves, the king who traditionally “made Israel to sin,” intended his idols to be symbols of Jehovah. Ahab, though he used the term “Baal,” which means “Lord,” and though his conception of the deity was stained by sinister associations brought in with Jezebel from Tyre, would have described himself as a worshipper of Jehovah.

It would almost seem that they believed too much. They had a way of leaving out what we call “secondary causes.” We think of thunder as “caused” by atmospheric conditions, of disease as the result of bad sanitation or of germs. *These explanations, which supply the immediate cause, do not in the least eliminate the action of God.* The authorities in Russia believe with simple faith that:

The correct explanation of the origin of hail, rain, drought, *the appearance of insect plagues, the properties of various soils and the action of fertilizers* is the best form of anti-religious propaganda.

A more reasonable view is to say that the physical laws are the ways in which the Creator works. The Hebrews telescoped the argument, and spoke of the thunder as the voice of God, and the pestilence as the punishment for sin. Thus we have many poetical personifications. We also have the famous short diagnosis that has puzzled so many readers of the Book of Exodus, that "the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart." What is meant is that the Lord did not miraculously intervene to suspend the operation of the law that fear and ill-temper grow if they are not checked. (In other contexts it is said that "Pharaoh's heart was hardened," or that "Pharaoh hardened his heart.") It was not really that the Hebrew thinkers believed too much. It was that they short-circuited the process of reason, very much as we all do when, hoping that something will prevent an undesired occurrence, we say "God forbid." Nevertheless, the result of the Old Testament terminology is that some mental adjustment is required in readers. It is only an adjustment. The language which has become natural to us about physical cause and effect is not really any less religious than the language of the Bible.

In another matter the belief of the Bible is more naive than that commonly held by religious people to-day. They believed in what are sometimes called "Special Providences," that is, instances of the special protection of one favoured individual from disaster. The Christian of to-day is driven by his larger equipment of knowledge to take a larger and less simple

view. We are accustomed to commend those whom we love to the watchful Providence of God. In war-time, or when there is sickness, we intercede for individuals whose life or well-being is in danger, and we are thankful if they are preserved. But we do not imagine that the course of bullets or of fragments of shrapnel is miraculously deflected to save the life of the young man for whom the parish in England has been praying. In Homer the gods—and more particularly the goddesses—intervened, sometimes very unscrupulously as it seems to us, to protect their favourite heroes in battle by means of miraculous smoke-screens and the like. In the Old Testament the good warrior is encouraged to believe that:

A thousand shall fall beside thee,
And ten thousand at thy right hand;
But it shall not come nigh thee

The faith of a modern Christian is affected by his knowledge of the large scale on which the affairs of the world are ordered. He does not believe that the death of any soldier in battle is, so to speak, a surprise to God. He knows that the flight and momentum of a projectile depends on its materials and workmanship, the strength of the projecting gun, the skill of the gunner, the force of the wind, and perhaps other circumstances. If there is one soldier whose life, by reason of what he may be expected to do in after years, is of extraordinary value, for whom, moreover, many prayers have been said, there is no warrant that he will be saved. And any gratitude that may be felt for the saving of one life which is held dear and has been prayed for, is tempered by the knowledge that other lives were lost.

This realist view is found sometimes in the Old

Testament. For example, when King David and General Joab conspired together to set Uriah the Hittite in the forefront of the hottest battle, they were reckoning on the general principle that war takes its toll. In fact, by arranging that Uriah's fellow-soldiers should "retire from him," they were weighting the scales, in the way that sinners unhappily can do, against any possible divine intention to preserve his life. The historian, who in the name of God condemns the whole episode (2 Samuel xi, 27), also takes the realist view that in a fierce battle it is likely that an officer who leads the attack will be killed. The realist view in general is that those who engage in war let loose a gigantic engine of destruction, whose lumbering, half-blind course is certain to take heavy toll. It might even be said that the best men, as being likely to volunteer or to be chosen for dangerous duty, or as being likely to be found in prominent positions, are on the whole most likely to be killed. There is abundant reason to pray for soldiers—those of their friends who believe in prayer could not do otherwise—but there is no warrant that "our Charlie" rather than "their Bob" will come safely home. So far as Charlie and Bob are concerned, they probably have a very simple faith, with something of determinism about it. They both hope to survive. They are both willing to die. Each is ready to risk his life for the sake of the other, and it is likely enough that one of these days one of them will give it for the other. Perhaps they will die side by side. And all the time God is over the battle, knowing the issue, and suffering it to be decided by the difference between men and men and nation and nation. Truly, those who believe that freedom and truth must in the end prevail must learn to take long

and deep views, so long that they fatigue the imagination, and so deep that they put a strain upon the faith.

We have departed somewhat from the Old Testament, but the purpose of this book is to examine the classical examples of faith and the reasons for faith in a way that will point their relevance to the present distress. To return to those ancient Semitic writings, which come to us out of a world circumstantially so different from ours but in essentials very much the same, we observe what is perhaps the most splendid thing about the faith of the Old Testament. It climbs—or it would be better theology to say that it was lifted—from a chauvinist belief in a tribal deity to the heights touched by Second Isaiah.

It is worth while to glance at some of the landmarks of the ascent. Amos is one. He lived in a time when the rich were very rich and the poor were very poor. There was plenty of religion, but it was of the kind that says, "I am perfectly willing to go to church now and then in the country, and to subscribe in reason to church funds. But we can't have these long-haired prophets brawling in the Chapel Royal, with scare-mongering talk about Assyria and impudent threats of a judgement on the sins of society. I am not violently religious myself, but if the clergy would only stick to their own business I should be the last man in the world to complain. As for Assyria, it is high time that we did import a little of their culture. At the last visit I paid to Nineveh I was made to feel quite provincial. I'd never seen the *new mode for finger-nails*. And the music in the Temple of Nisroch was really tip-top. Of course, I am a Jehovah man myself, as we all are, but there's something very attractive about the Nisroch-cult. I don't think a little

of it would do us any harm. I'm sure the Assyrians don't really mean to attack us. And if they did, I should think we have plenty of men of the old Israelite bull-dog breed. Jehovah would see us through." It was the task of Amos to puncture this airy confidence, to break it to them that Jehovah was no tribal deity, but the Creator-God, who held in His hand the destinies of all nations and would judge them all.

A few years later Isaiah launched one of the finest defiances in history against the armies of Sennacherib. The speech of the Rabshakeh in 2 Kings xviii is very good propaganda, in the Lord Haw-Haw manner. He even tries (*v.* 22) to turn to his master's advantage the recent and probably not very popular religious reforms carried out by Hezekiah. But the reply of Isaiah is superb. It is not propaganda. It is not even designed to put heart into king or populace, though it no doubt did. It is designed to put the Rabshakeh in his place. It is the burning eloquence of an insulted and outraged faith:

Whom hast thou reproached and blasphemed? and against whom hast thou exalted thy voice and lifted up thine eyes on high? even against the Holy One of Israel.

By the way that he came, by the same shall he return, and he shall not come into this city, saith the Lord For I will defend this city to save it, for mine own sake, and for my servant David's sake (xix, 22, 33, 34).

And this from a small city of a few thousand inhabitants to the general commanding the army of a great Empire, to which the larger and more important Northern Kingdom of Israel had just fallen. What happened after that is not clear in detail. Herodotus, the Greek historian, seems to suggest a rat-carried bubonic plague.

The Book of Kings calls it "the angel of the Lord." At all events, the siege was raised, and the little kingdom of Judah breathed again.

A century passes, and a faith that is, in its very different way, even more wonderful, is expressed by Jeremiah. Isaiah's confidence had arisen from his belief in the inviolability of Zion, the sacred spot, "the place that I have chosen to put my name there." It was there that he had seen his own vision (*ch.* vi) which made him a prophet. He could not believe that Zion could ever perish from the earth. Jeremiah could.

In his day the enemy was Babylon, which had replaced Assyria as the dominant power of Western Asia. Jeremiah knew that the Temple must go the way of Shiloh, the ancient sanctuary which had been destroyed by the Philistines in the time of Eli. The confidence that everybody had that somehow everything would be all right was "trust in lying words" (Jeremiah vii, 4). He was a defeatist, but he was no Quisling. "It is false; I fall not away to the Chaldeans" (xxxvii, 14). But he knew that Babylon would conquer, and that it was the Lord's will that they should conquer and that Jerusalem should be laid waste and the Temple robbed and spoiled and burned. He could face all this because he knew that the Lord would in two generations (xxix, 10) make with His people a covenant of a new kind. It is described in xxxi, 31ff. It will be written not on stone, but in human lives. It will be a union of hearts, the divine heart and the heart of a converted people. There will be no need for an elaborate apparatus of education, a passing of a message from prophet to hearer, from neighbour to neighbour. There will be a spiritual democracy. The light of truth shall be socialised.

They shall all know the Lord, from the least of them to the greatest of them.

This is faith of the highest order. It is far more than a simple defiance of a powerful enemy. That can be done by anyone who has enough faith. Very few will have so much as Isaiah, but it is a matter of quantity. But in the faith of Jeremiah there is a new quality. More than anyone else in the Old Testament (except perhaps the author of Isaiah liii) he anticipates the Cross of Christ. He can even bear to contemplate a breach in the national continuity, because in his view the thin line of spiritual succession will not break.

In using the example of Isaiah and Jeremiah for guidance now, it looks as if we ought to combine them. On the one hand it looks as if the things for which Britain, at home and overseas, has stood and stands, are things of value to the world. It is impossible for us to believe that God means them to perish or even to be very seriously impaired. What is called the British Empire is a genuine experiment in the direction of encouraging freedom and self-government in all regions concerned. With certain of the confessedly backward nations in what are called Colonies, the process has not gone very far, but just laws impartially administered and the beginnings of education are no small thing. India is in a state of transition. The Dominions are wholly self-governing and independent. Behind all that there is something which there is no space to analyse. It is the British Character. We are of course prejudiced in its favour, but very many Britons, having done a good deal of heart-searching and some genuine repentance, believe that the British character is one of the assets for the future of the world. Here then is some ground

for the confidence of Isaiah. We are sure that God will not allow us to go under. For the same reason we find it hard to echo the convictions of Jeremiah, and do not see the specific ground for doing so. Nevertheless, the necessary lesson to be learned from Jeremiah is that adversity does not cut the rope of faith, which joins earth and heaven, and can always be used for the glory of God. Newman in his first *Tract for the Times* encouraged the English clergy to think of themselves not as gentlemen or educated men, or the inhabitants of commodious parsonages with a stake in the country, but as links of the Apostolic chain. That status the world had not given and the world could not take away. It may seem a small example, but it is instructive. The blind fury, with the abhorred shears, may slit the thin-spun rope of prosperity, of individual life, even of national prestige, but it is defeated by the invisible, intangible cords by which Christendom is hung in the heavens from century to century.

Jeremiah's hope was uttered, and then slept (or matured) for seventy years. At the end of that time it blazed out again in the anonymous writer known as Second Isaiah. It is dangerous to begin quoting from him because it is so hard to stop. But it is the fact that a prophet among the exiles in Babylon hailed Cyrus, the heathen king who first threatened and then overthrew the power of Babylon, as an instrument in the hands of Jehovah. The liberal-minded willingness of Cyrus to allow all captives to return made him appear in the prophet's eyes as the "shepherd," even the "anointed" of Jehovah. The first eight chapters of Second Isaiah are a shout of exultation. The difficulties and dangers of a long journey across the desert are

those from whom peace may be withdrawn. The fact was that the Old Testament people knew nothing or almost nothing of the future life. That being so, their faith that "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof" is astonishing. But all inequalities had to be explained, and redress found for them, if possible, within the limits of earthly life. This proved too difficult.

The great spokesman of rebellion is Job. Job, like Prometheus and Milton's Satan, impugns God's justice. It is a tribute to the faith of the Old Testament in general that it can carry both the indignation of Job and the pessimism of Ecclesiastes. Job with furious eloquence exclaims, "This is not fair. I am not wicked, as my friends unkindly suggest. Why do I suffer thus?" The answer is given in chapters xxxviii-xli. It is not strictly an answer at all. The act of God is never an answer to specific questions. The Cross itself does not explain *why* James is martyred and John lives to old age. The act of God is a demonstration of the divine method in general, from which men are left to make the application for themselves. The burden of the answer here is that Job is a single case, not to be suffered to depress the scales against innumerable testimonies of the un-sleeping Providence of God. This is strong meat for any man's faith to digest. Job in his second rejoinder (xlii, 2-6) submits to it, but his submission can only have been achieved by the aid of some faith which he has built up before by other means and other experience. In any case, it seems to require a sequel. The required sequel is not, as the editor supposed, an imaginary return of material prosperity to Job, and more sons and daughters to compensate for those whom he had lost,

but something that comes out of the second volume of the Bible, the volume of the Christian Revelation.

Psalm xlix carries on the discussion of the problem, and looks rather deeper. The verse:

For he shall carry nothing away with him when he dieth:
neither shall his pomp follow him—

touches the hour when the value of mundane things is effectively decided, the hour of death. Even if the Psalmist is not here saying, as he seems to say more clearly in lxxiii, 23-25, that the life of the believer actually passes beyond the three score years and ten or four score years, he is saying that it cannot be estimated purely on its own internal evidence. Unqualified and unhesitating affirmations of resurrection are hardly found till we come to Daniel and the Apocrypha.

This problem, which vexed not only the author of Job and the three Psalmists quoted, but Habakkuk (chapter i) was never solved. The contemporaries of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel felt it, and they had their own short-cut to a solution. The children, they said, suffer for the sins of their fathers. But both prophets (Ezekiel xviii and xxxiii, Jeremiah xxxi, 29) refuse to accept this, and stand out as the asserters of individual responsibility. It was more honest than the easy solution of the age, and more true, but it left the problem still very difficult. There is only one quarter from which the light comes. As Dr. A. S. Peake said in 1904, "The Cross of Jesus is either the key to the riddle of the universe, or it darkens the mystery."¹ The point where the Old Testament comes as near as an anticipation can to touching the height, or perhaps rather the depth, of

¹ *The Problem of Suffering in the Old Testament*, p. 149.

Christian faith is Isaiah liii. The author there sets before his astonished and incredulous contemporaries the picture of one despised and rejected, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, who proved in the end to have been wounded for our transgressions and bruised for our iniquities. Is it too much to say that a window was opened in heaven and through it the Son of God, not yet Incarnate, but, as from the beginning, the Word, the Only-Begotten, with God, abiding in the bosom of the Father, was seen by a prophet's eye.

Another point of comparable altitude touched by the faith of the Old Testament introduces the second main characteristic of the later period, the Psalter. The Psalter is rightly called the *Hymn Book of the Second Temple*. There had been music and psalmody in the Temple of Solomon, though not so much as the priestly Chronicler, familiar with the liturgical wealth of his own day, supposed in all innocence that there had been. The Second Temple, built by Zerubbabel in 520 to 516, after the Return, was a much smaller affair, but it was a strong centre of devotion, and many of the Psalms were composed for processions and thanksgivings in it or pilgrimages to it. See, for example, cxviii, 19, 20, or cxxi, 1. Others, like xxiii or cxix, are the quiet meditations of an individual, even though the "I" of the Psalter, when it is not actually the whole nation, is always a representative and very Church-conscious member of 't. Others, as we have seen, reflect on a problem. Many are cries out of desolation and affliction. In these "the poor" are generally identified with "the godly." There is an occasional note of vindictiveness.

Every emotion and every mental state is represented—

Triumph—

O God, wonderful art thou in thy holy place: even the God of Israel; he will give strength and power unto his people; blessed be God (lxviii, 35);

Joy for deliverance from peril—

When the Lord turned again the captivity of Sion: then were we like unto them that dream.

Then was our mouth filled with laughter: and our tongue with joy. Then said they among the heathen: the Lord hath done great things for them (cxxxvi, 1, 2, 3);

Humility—

I refrain my soul, and keep it low, like as a child that is weaned from his mother: yea, my soul is even as a weaned child (xxxix, 3);

Enthusiasm—

I will run the way of thy commandments: when thou hast set my heart at liberty (cxix, 32);

Contempt for idolatry—

Thus they turned their glory into the similitude of a calf that eateth hay (cvi, 20);

A pious, but rather fearful delight in the glories of Nature—

Praise the Lord, O my soul: O Lord my God, thou art become exceeding glorious: thou art clothed with majesty and honour. Thou deckest thyself with light as it were a garment: and spreadest out the heavens like a curtain.

Who layeth the beams of his chamber in the waters: and maketh the clouds his chariot, and walketh upon the wings of the wind (civ, 1, 2, 3);

A quick eye for the rightness and occasionally the humour of "poetic justice"—

He hath graven and digged up a pit: and is fallen himself into the destruction that he made for others.

For his travail shall come upon his own head: and his wickedness shall fall on his own pate (vii, 16, 17).

All is founded on consummate faith in the divine everlastingness—

Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands

They shalt perish, but thou shalt endure: they all shall wax old as doth a garment;

And as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed; but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.

The children of thy servants shall continue: and their seed shall stand fast in thy sight (cii, 25-28).

It is not wonderful that Earl Baldwin, speaking lately at the opening of a College Library in Exeter, said that a constant element in his own war-reading was the Psalter and the Gospel of St. John.

There is no more convincing testimony anywhere to the power of faith than the Old Testament. It is in actual quality vastly inferior to the Gospel of St. John, but even its deficiencies, and the fact that it is very far from being the only pre-Christian testimony, are part of its value as evidence. Socrates, whose death is said by the Master of Balliol to have stopped the moral rot of Greece, was a martyr, upheld by his faith. His faith was founded on a strong conviction of the truth of his intellectual position and of the foolishness of his adver-

saries. A man who can thus support himself is worthy of immense respect. But the faith of those who can say—

It comforts me to know
That though I perish, truth is so—

is the portion of a very small number and is very incommunicable. The Buddha seems to have owed his courage and perseverance, in so far as the events of his life can be ascertained at all, to the possession of a singularly sweet and pure nature. This, again, is not everybody's birthright. Confucius was a sage whose teaching during the greater part of a long life was listened to with admiration by enthusiastic disciples. Lao-tse was likewise a philosopher who appears to have spent his long life in teaching. Zoroaster was a seer and a prophet of unquestionable inspiration, but a solitary voice. The spokesmen of Hebrew faith are a dynasty. They cover—from the author of the Song of Deborah in Judges to the author of the Book of Daniel—nearly a thousand years of history.

Throughout the whole of this time the Hebrew people were upborne by faith in God. It is plain that in the early stages it was a rudimentary faith in an imperfectly known and therefore, in effect, imperfect Deity. The valour of Samson was religiously very crude. The piety even of David had obvious limitations. That of Solomon, even apart from such idolatrous practices as he may have adopted from abroad, perhaps owed a good deal to his conviction that a monarch of such importance ought to have a fine Temple attached to his fine palace. Yet all the time it was growing. The people who had as their rule of life the precepts contained in the early nucleus of the Law, Exodus xx-xxiv, had already gone

a long way. And when we reach the defiance of Isaiah in 2 Kings xix or the conviction of Isaiah liii that the sacrifice of a martyr is the triumph of God and the seed of the Church, we are transported to great heights. In their long war against evil they were like an army hard-pressed by the enemy. They had their weak places, their failures, their treacheries. There came a time when five-sixths of them were disarmed and captured and ceased to be an effective fighting force. A little later the small remainder of their army was deprived of what they had generally supposed to be their chief assets, their capital, their sanctuary, the soil of their native land, and their political existence. Yet *their faith did not die. It burned in them with a steadier glow.* It ceased to warm national pride in the old semi-secular way. It struck deeper down into the fabric of the race and discovered the level of personal, spiritual faith.

Even at the very end, when the great failure came, and the Heir of the Covenant was not recognised but cast out, Israel may be said to have given birth to the Fulfiller of her own vocation. When the wife of Phinehas (1 Samuel iv, 19) was delivered of her child at a moment of supreme national and religious humiliation, she called him Ichabod, "The glory is departed." Yet the succession was continued. When Rachel bore her last son (Genesis xxxv, 18) she died, and as her soul was departing she called him Ben-oni, son of my sorrow. But his father, the surviving parent, who lived to go down into Egypt and see there the beginnings of what may be called national life, called him Benjamin, son of my right hand. It is some such picture as that which St. Paul has in his mind in Romans ix-xi when he is

facing the tragedy of non-fulfilment of the hopes on which he and his nation had been bred. He accepted it as the fulfilment of the faith which the God of their fathers had planted deep down in their national character and had nourished secretly beneath the surface-hopes. The Jews dismissed the Crucified as a Ben-oni. They did not even assign to Him enough importance to make them say "Ichabod." To St. Paul and to Christendom He has been the Son of the right hand, not only of Israel, but of God. The Jews had during their history attained great heights of faith. Even their fall, tragedy as it was, opened a great door and an effectual. It was, as St. Paul said, the riches of the world. Their loss was the riches of the Gentiles.

CHAPTER THREE

FAITH IN THE GOSPELS

THERE are a great many things in Jesus of Nazareth which are unique, found in no other character of human history. One is his faith in God. He said, "Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also," and no one has ever directed so whole a heart towards the treasure that is in heaven. Some of the most extravagant-seeming Oriental figures of speech like "the hairs of your head are all numbered" have doubtless a scientific accuracy. The confirmation, development and eventual deterioration of the bodies of men are in accordance with the divine laws. Nothing is too great or too small for Providence to oversee. But we do not turn to the Gospels for biological information or for medical prophylactic or repair. We turn to them for guidance and reassurement about life, and for knowledge of the spiritual forces that regenerate and direct our nature. The value of such uncompromising words as "The hairs of your head are all numbered" is that they reveal an utter trust in God. "Be not anxious for your life. Behold the birds of the heaven, your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they? Seek ye first His kingdom and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." The re-wording in the Revised Version which turns the "Take no thought" of 1611 into "Be not anxious" is perfectly correct. The injunction was not

of St. Mark is said by severe historical critics to be as theological as the Gospel of St. John. Unfailing trust in the Father is united with a unique consciousness of Sonship.

That being so, we should expect, when we examine "the faith of Jesus," to find that it is rooted in theology. We actually find more than that. We find that it is rooted in theology, in its strict sense of a doctrine of God, and also in a conviction about His own Person and Vocation, for which the term "Christology" would perhaps be over-technical but hardly an exaggeration of the implicit force. One of the consequences of this is that the theology of the Gospels, being a theology of crisis, is just what is needed at a time of crisis and tragedy, when "*Men's hearts are failing them for fear and expectation of the things that are coming on the earth.*"

This little book is not intended to be a scientific examination of New Testament problems, only an incentive to faith. But part of its method is to commend faith by calling attention to some of its historical triumphs. Of these triumphs the supreme example is seen in the Four Gospels. A few illustrative fragments of their evidence will therefore be collected here. Each of the four Gospels adds something to the picture. For convenience, and because what is desired is illustration rather than scientific proof, which should be sought elsewhere, the passages quoted or referred to are all from St. Luke.

The more superficial readers of the story do not always see the vital importance of the Baptism and Temptation. The Baptism does not mark any actual change in the nature of Jesus. His metaphysical status in the sum-total of reality remained what it had been. He did

not then *become* Son of God, or Divine. The Baptism represents the certainty of conscious Christhood and the beginning of active ministry. From that moment He is Called and Sent. The period of preparation is over. War has begun.

The Temptation follows, as it must, immediately. It was essential that the Messiah should fix at once the purpose and method of His Messianic work. The three Temptations are all Messianic. They begin: "If thou be the Son of God." Is He to supply the natural needs of His own body by means which are not available to common men? Is He to consent to establish His Kingdom by the methods of earth, and so "to do a great right, do a little wrong"? Is He to presume on the Providence of the Father by a spectacular experiment? No one has summed up the quality of the answers to these three suggestions better than Sir John Seeley in *Ecce Homo*. Philosophers, he remarks, have sometimes wondered what would happen to a man's character if he had the gift of making himself invisible. They have always agreed that, with the instant removal of all public opinion, character would probably collapse altogether. Here, however, is One who is moved, in unique conditions of emancipation, and by the possession of, shall we say, at least unusual powers, to forge for Himself a stricter discipline. "Create food," suggests the Tempter, "for your natural needs. You will be robbing no one, and no one will ever know." Next: "Use second-rate means to bring about a first-rate result. Compromise cannot be avoided in human affairs. No one will blame you afterwards when the Kingdom has been set up and the world is at your feet." Third: "Accept the ninety-first Psalm at its face-value, and you will compel the

world to believe in you. Why not? I am saying this in the interests of the Kingdom. Things being as they are, it is the only way." The answers, given each time in the words of Holy Scripture, were to the effect that divinely-promised ends are only to be reached by those who follow divinely-sanctioned means. David, on a historic occasion, refused to wear Saul's proffered armour, because he had not proved it. Our Lord in the wilderness refused to wear the armour of the world because He recognised it as for Him the armour of the devil. Is it wonderful that after that, even though He was delivered from the onset of temptation only "for a season," He returned into Galilee "in the power of the Spirit"?

The healings and exorcisms that follow are all the fruit of an intense faith that human sickness and suffering are not the real purpose of God, and a determination to restore the divine order by producing health. So He said later to a healed sufferer, "Woman, thou art loosed from thine infirmity. And He laid his hands upon her, and immediately she was made straight, and glorified God" (xiii, 13). This work, great as it was, and one laying a heavy tax on spiritual force, was only a small part of the Master's whole vocation. That is expressed in—

I must proclaim the good tidings of the kingdom of God to the other cities also: for therefore was I sent (iv, 43).

There was no "escapism" about it. The Lord does not Himself dwell, and He does not encourage His disciples to dwell, in a world where nothing matters. There is no retreat into a castle in the air, which may be impregnable, but is at the same time wholly unprofitable.

Incarnation means taking *flesh*, and the earthly years between the cradle and the grave are the arena upon which our struggle between the better and the worse is waged. Politics, economics, family life and the control of natural impulses are all to be brought under God, and, if faith in God does not touch these regions, it is a useless butterfly.

The sense of mission remains all through the story. It is intensified in what follows the beginning of the Last Journey in ix, 51. It is dominantly a sense of spiritual mission to the souls of men, but care for the body is never far away. "Thy sins be forgiven thee" and "Arise and walk" are said to the same man. That which the messengers were directed to "tell John" was chiefly a catalogue of bodily healings, but the climax of it was, "The poor have the good news proclaimed to them." Even so it might be said that it is essential that an army, a nation, shall be fed, but they are not worth feeding if they have no soul.

Peter's Confession is a great moment. The steady, unwavering faith of the Master has elicited at last a recognisable measure of response from one of His disciples. Hitherto all they had been able to say was, "Who, then, is this?" Even this was in effect the beginning of the Creed, but in form it was only a puzzled question. Peter now sees, to adopt the true rendering of an expression which occurs more than once in Acts, that "the Christ is Jesus." The expectations of the coming of the majestic Figure of the Anointed One, who in the Old Testament appears as the Davidic King, or sometimes in still more exalted, even super-human guise, are seen by Peter to be realised in the Master with whom they have walked and talked during

these strange exciting months since they heard and obeyed the imperious call of, "Follow Me."

Always He is the Master, they the slow, only half-enlightened learners. They are sent out to heal the sick and proclaim the kingdom. They return, full of importance because demons had obeyed their exorcisings. "While you," He tells them, "were gathering the fruits on the circumference, I at the centre was facing the full shock of the encounter with evil. I was beholding Satan fallen as lightning from heaven" (x, 18). This is followed by the great outburst which recalls the Johanne terminology and helps to bridge the gap between the first three Gospels and the fourth:

All things have been delivered unto me of my Father. and no one knoweth who the Son is, save the Father. and who the Father is, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal Him (x, 22).

Nevertheless, the uniqueness of the portion of the Son is not for His own enjoyment, not in order that He may plume Himself or exult that He alone is the Anointed One. The words, "And he to whomsoever the Son willeth to reveal him," are presently followed by:

Fear not, little flock: for it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom (xii, 32),

and by a bold dispensing of salvation, in which strangers from east and west and north and south are pictured as coming in, and those who conceived of themselves as the ticket-holders are cast out. There is all the difference in the world between the proud, mechanical sense of destiny and the humble, flexible sense of divine vocation.

In this later half of the story—it begins at ix, 51—

there is an even heightened sense of mission. The message sent to Herold Antipas—

Behold, I cast out devils and perform cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I am perfected. Howbeit I must go on my way to-day and to-morrow and the day following: for it cannot be that a prophet perish out of Jerusalem (xiii, 32, 33)—

is one of the signs of impending crisis. There are repeated references to a coming death, which are not understood. The homely triumph of the ride into Jerusalem elicited enthusiasm from the disciples and, it would seem, a temporary and superficial response of faith from others, but at the end of it the Lord is seen weeping over the city which had not known the day of its visitation. Yet the last journey is not clouded by any lack of faith. The grim parable of the Wicked Husbandmen at first seems to suggest that servants and son go down together, and all that the lord of the vineyard can then do is to punish the husbandmen and enter upon a fresh lease with other tenants. But in the end faith breaks through. "He looked upon them and said:

What then is this which is written, The stone which the builders rejected, the same was made the head of the corner? (xx, 17).

Not only another, like stone, but the same stone. It is a testimony of faith. It teaches patience and proclaims final triumph.

This is perhaps the moment at which to pause and make an application. This chapter was written in the last week of May 1940, while the fate of the British and French Expeditionary Forces in Belgium, suddenly deprived of the aid of those who had implored their

presence there, was matter of sorrowful conjecture. It seemed that they were facing one of three prospects, a miraculous withdrawal from what seemed to the layman an almost impossible situation with a bare remnant of their numbers, the capitulation of a few spent men who had not slept for days, who could just stand, amid heaps of corpses hardly more lifeless than themselves, or total extinction of all ranks. A priest of sixty who lives in what is, for the present, the security of South-West England, and has never yet had to face the prospect of violent death, must be consumed by a sense of unworthiness even to write of what they did. The stone which the builders, they who by force of circumstances had the power of controlling events, had rejected, *the same* became the head of the corner.

What is meant by "the same stone" is this: It does not involve any direct comparison—such as would be repudiated with generous and even furious humility by those concerned—between British or French soldiers and the Saviour of the world. I am only saying that failure can be so glorious that it seems without more ado to justify a cause, and unquestionably fortifies it a hundredfold. Young men in their thousands die in their agony. They are, for the most part, not fathers of families. They leave no child to carry on their name. Yet their children, that is, all such as may hereafter enjoy freedom of conscience and of mind, will rise up and call them blessed. For it is clear that the ambition of the Germans is to dominate, *because they are Germans*. At the very best, even if it were to be conceded that German influence would be a good thing for the world, it would be a limited and partial thing, intolerably small. On the other side is the policy and love of freedom. It cannot

of course be claimed that British life has achieved perfect or universal freedom, or indeed that humanity will ever touch perfection in freedom or any other ideal. But at least it opens a door through which freedom can come in. It does not put fetters on the Truth of God.

This leads us to the Cross itself, and the faith that shone out there. The marvellous instinct—is “instinct” the right word?—of the New Testament has clothed the central event with a furniture of narrative. It is a worthy setting for the revelation of what may now fairly be called the faith of God in God. For now the long, slow, preparatory development is complete. The sheltering garment of flesh is not thrown aside—that could not be; the thing called the Incarnation is for ever—but it is worn very thin by suffering. The Love divine, all love excelling, Joy of Heaven to earth come down, is now more clearly recognisable. Faith rings in every syllable. There in the Upper Room the air is heavy with sadness. Hands, sinewy after years of manual labour, thin now with frugal living and spiritual strain, hold up a chalice. The note first sounded, one of human affection—

With desire have I desired to eat this passover with you
before I suffer—

grows into something larger and more universal:

I say unto you, I will not eat it, until it be fulfilled in the kingdom of God. . . . I will not drink from henceforth of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come (xxii, 16, 18).

The rite is at present the sombre symbolism of a Body broken and Blood poured out in death. There is for the moment nothing more, only sheer sacrifice. Yet in these forward-looking words there is a hint that the Supper

will be re-enacted again and again and again in years to come, a Sacrament of power because it is linked, historically indeed with the fifth day, but mystically and effectively with the first day of the week. The "chalice of the grapes of God" has grace and virtue because, when it is put to the lips of the faithful, the Lord renews it for them in a kingdom that has come.

What was called just now the shining of the divine through the human is only to be seen by faith-sharpened eyes. The evidence is of a paradoxical sort. The champion, who has met the demand of Satan for the soul of Simon Peter, and has made provision that his faith should not fail, who knows that even if it fail it will recover and make him a strength to his brothers, also says, "I am in the midst of you as he that serveth." Ecclesiastics have often been proud, but it has to be remembered that the highest and most characteristic function of the priest is to wait at Table, and the title claimed by the arch-ecclesiastic, thought by some to be over-dictatorial, is still *servus servorum Dei*. If there is pride among Christian ecclesiastics, or among Christian laymen, it is not by the will or example of the Master. It is no part of Christianity.

To comment fully on—

Lord, behold here are two swords And he said unto them,
It is enough (xxii, 38)

would be to rehearse the whole story of the Middle Ages and to recapitulate the whole mediæval doctrine of Church and State. That story and that doctrine must be left to their own supreme historical importance. The doctrine need not, even though modern Europe is its heir, concern us now, and whether or not the things

that happened were in accordance with reason and right, the official explanation was a monstrous perversion of the meaning of a simple incident. The true meaning is perhaps no more than what a mother might say in reply to the innocent enthusiasm of a child who has said, "I've got my sword, Mother, I will protect you." "That will be splendid." Or, in the words of the Gospel, "It is enough."

Gethsemane has been over-much isolated. It was a consummate moment, when a world-affecting choice was narrowed to the issue of a single "Yes" or "No," but the effect of it has been to make us associate "Thy will be done" too wholly with suffering. It is a mistake to suppose that suffering is always to be chosen. There are forms of unselfishness which are foolish and non-constructive. The true view of what was done in Gethsemane or on the Cross is seen in the Epistle to the Hebrews:

Who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and hath sat down at the right hand of the throne of God (xii, 2).

Nevertheless, it was a triumph of faith, not to be understood in its grandeur until the mystery of the Atonement is worthily believed. To face death bravely is something, but it is a thing which had often been done before and has often been done since. To face the mystery of iniquity, to taste the oncoming of its noisome breath and yet not to consent to it, but to hold on to the single motive of the Glory of God, this is the thing which was done only once and once for all in the history of the world.

The failure of Peter represents what happens every

day. To have been selfish, cruel, lustful, to have neglected a soldier's or civilian's duty, to have failed in truth or courage or compassion, is to deny Christ. The enemy of mankind drives a wedge in the defences of faith, and faith forgets, or does not care, and fails. It is not even then too late, though the devil will always whisper that it is. Nothing is unforgivable, so long as faith is not dead. Where it is only wounded, or asleep, or weary, it can be revived. Peter's faith must surely have revived when he saw the outcome of the remorseless series of events to which his own fear had made him a disloyal ally. "Can these bones live?" the Spirit of the Lord had said to Ezekiel. "O Lord God, thou knowest," said the prophet. Then follows a demonstration to his eyes. To borrow a phrase from the Book of Joshua, "The Lord, the God of gods, he knoweth, and Israel he shall know" (xxii, 22). God knows, and Peter, the man who is the representative and the example and the warning of all of us, shall know soon. Soon he will be one of two who have run quickly through the morning air to a sepulchre in a garden and seen something which has made him begin to begin again to believe.

Christ before Pilate is the supreme example of the divine reversals of human standards of value. Whether or not there is any truth in the cynical assumption of M. Anatole France that in after years the name of Jesus would not linger in the ex-procurator's memory, it is certain that Pilate had a lofty contempt for all that was at stake between Jesus and Jews. Pilate was a great person in his day. And yet the modern world only knows the name of Pilate because he happened to be sitting on the judgment-seat at the trial of a certain Prisoner. Truly, it gives fresh illustration to a saying recorded in

St. John, "You did not choose me, but I chose you." It is, very obviously, faith, because without faith the Prisoner would have accepted the situation, as, indeed, in His external conduct, He did. But to the immediate, intuitive, perfect faith of the Prisoner, and even to the laborious disciple-faith, struggling to believe the truth but rather overawed by the visible, it is Pilate who is being tried.

This is the thing which faith will always know about the Pilates and the Caiaphases of life. They are naught. They have no substance, no contact with reality. A dictator-tyrant may dominate millions and enforce his will. Newspapers may echo his prejudices, and innumerable persons may be murdered or imprisoned because they will not be fashioned according to his word nor be transformed by the depraving of their mind. Yet he is worthless. In the world of real values he does not count.

The two prisoners, Jesus and Barabbas, are always with us. Barabbas is kept captive, as a rule, by good-will, and also by convention and the power of public opinion. Sometimes he is suffered to go free, and his Fellow-Prisoner is sacrificed. Simon of Cyrene, the black man, is the innocent cross-bearer, the African in too many of his contacts with other races, or the refugee, the member of a nation whose soil was overrun and laid waste because it was coveted or because its frontiers ran unluckily. There is some reason to conjecture that Simon was afterwards converted, and was the father of a Christian family.¹ If so, he came to understand, as many innocent sufferers never do in this life, the meaning of his heavy burden. *He had seen that morning*

¹ See St. Mark xv, 21, and Romans xvi, 13

its physical shape. Now he perceived its spiritual nature. Its foot rested on the brown earth, where men live. Its arms went east and west. Its top pointed to heaven. That was all. It enclosed no space. It gave no easy or neat explanations. It was itself a contradiction, a paradox. But at its heart there met two things, the life of man that is in all the world, and the love of God that comes down from heaven.

The episode of the daughters of Jerusalem is one of the most plainly-inspired additions to the story. "Weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." Do not exhaust your emotions and your strength in lamenting the physical sufferings of one Sufferer. Think rather of the burden which He has on His heart:

O people crucified in every land,
 Mothers in all the earth weeping your sons!
 Sisters and lovers kissing the feet of love,
 Poor way-worn feet, gross toil-disfigured hands,
 So loved, so loved!

Once more the dead Christ lies—borne down the ages

This lets us into the heart of the Atonement. If it was not some kind of mystical self-identification with the sufferings and sins of humanity, "a ransom for many" (St. Mark x, 45), then it was only one more martyrdom, innocent and heroic, but of no cosmic power. It is, of course, impossible to prove with words on paper that it had such power. The only evidence is that the world has in fact been moved by it. Sinners have been converted by it to a new way of life, and by it weaklings have been fortified.

To what is it all due? It is due to two things: the power that was behind the Act of the Cross, and to its

motive. To examine the power which caused the Crucified to be *Christus Victor* would take us too far from our present limited subject into the region of pure theology, and is a task that cannot be attempted here. But it is most relevant to our purpose to observe that the motive was Love, working through Faith. Love is the only quite unconquerable force, and faith is the medium through which it is received from God and operates in life. There was only one thing which the enemies of Jesus could not make Him do, and that was to leave off loving them. He could love utterly because He leaned utterly on God, and there was no competing claim on His allegiance. He could love them because He believed in mankind, including them. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do," is a cry of mingled love and faith. "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise" is another.

The tragic fourth word from the Cross, "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (St. Mark xv, 34—not in St. Luke), which seems to speak the loss of faith and to have no particular relevance to love, is paradoxically the high peak of both. It needs an effort of faith to understand this. Let us approach it by looking at the Old Testament figure who most nearly anticipates the Cross. Jeremiah had everything—king, priests, the other prophets, the nobles and the people—against him. His was the thoroughly unpopular side. He held on because he was so sure of God. If the Face of God had been withdrawn from him he could not have endured. He did endure "as seeing him who is invisible." What if, in order to ensure that the World-Atonement should reach the bearing of the last ounce of burden, the feeling of the last pangs of agony, should be an

unlimited testing of the obedience and devotion of the Saviour, the Face of God must hide itself from Him? What if He, Himself in His pre-Incarnate state the Creator of mankind and of the design of man's redemption, was consenting now to be cut off from His base, to have no secret consolation, no reinforcing memories or hopes, nothing to hold on to? And yet He still held on. We have in history, in both war and peace, great stories of heroism. We know that our nature can be tried, and tried, and tried, and not break. But there is no trial in the history of mankind that can be compared with this. This is Love standing on nothing. This is Faith, which, when there is no air, still breathes. This is divine.

The Resurrection is, in all that matters, an appeal to faith. There are, indeed, some good historical evidences (the beginning of Christianity as a religion, the new demeanour of the Eleven, the observance of Sunday and of the Breaking of the Bread, and other things) which are in their way convincing. But the essence of Christ's Resurrection is that it was not a demonstration to Pilate and Caiaphas that they had been guilty. It was the quiet creation of a new spirit in believers. It came with the surprising and yet meet and right quietness of the vital phrase in Haydn's *Creation*, "Let there be Light." To Mary Magdalene it came with the pronouncing of her name. To Peter it came, no one knows exactly how, but it must have been in some word of understanding and forgiveness. To the two men going to Emmaus it came across an inn-table, furnished with bread, and perhaps also wine. What came was a conviction that human life has a permanent reality, that the conclusions which the human intelli-

gence and soul and will have jointly reached are valid, and that death does not end all.

There is a simple faith which is content to say of those who die, whether as soldiers in battle or quietly in bed, "We shall meet again." The faith which is founded on Christ and Easter is more generously equipped *than that*. It knows that life is worth while. Pain may distort it, sin may corrupt it, tragedy may overwhelm it, but these things cannot be perfectly victorious. "Nay, in all these things we [can be] more than conquerors, through him that loved us."

CHAPTER FOUR

APOSTOLIC FAITH

THERE is direct and complete continuity from the four Gospels to what follows them. A sign of this is found in the opening words of St. Luke's second volume, the Acts of the Apostles, in which he clearly indicates that there had been something which Jesus *began* to do, and that the events now to be recorded were the things which Jesus *continued* to do. Yet it is possible in thought to isolate the Gospel-story and to imagine that a curtain drops after the Resurrection.

When it is lifted again, and the stage set for Act II, what is the situation? How far have we come? Where does the new Act begin?

The situation is most precarious. The Resurrection has not been accompanied by thunder and lightning nor confirmed by any divine voice speaking to mankind, or even to Jerusalem, out of the sky. All that had been heard was a very quiet voice, speaking out of a garden: "Not," as is said in Acts x, 41, "to all the people, but unto witnesses." Faith is the only asset.

There is plenty of faith even in the first chapter of the Book of Acts, even before Pentecost. They are determined to carry on, and they at once take steps to make up the number of the Apostles. But it is perhaps a sign that they are not yet equipped, that for this they have recourse to the casting of lots. Where there is simple faith in God and where are all the qualified

are ready to serve in any capacity, like R.A.F. pilots who step forward as one man when some exceptionally perilous duty must be undertaken "at all costs," the lot is well enough. But a better way has been found when it is possible to blend human discretion with the monition of the Guiding Spirit, when men can say, as was said later (xv, 28), "It seemed good to the Holy Ghost and to us."

After Pentecost a very great difference is discernible. It was not so much that their faith increased. It was rather that their faith now had a sure and permanent foundation, and was continually fed from an everlasting store. No human illustration will serve here. A solitary enthusiast who suddenly finds himself an element in a Government department created for the very purpose of which he thought he was a lonely pioneer, is enormously encouraged. A straggler from an army on the march in hostile country who is picked up again by his unit breathes again. But these are only human approaches to an understanding. They do not explain Pentecost. What happened at Pentecost was an Act of God which gave birth to a conviction that "Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world."

"He that is in you." There are two things to be said about this. One is that "He" is the Spirit of Christ. In the formal language of the Nicene Creed, the Holy Spirit "proceeds from the Father and the Son." In practice the Holy Spirit is most profitably thought of as the Vicar of Christ. The Son had become Incarnate. To that end it was essential that He should accept the limitations of human life. Human life must of necessity be lived in one human person, at one date, and in only one place at a time. The Saviour accepted these limita-

tions. The Divine Word lived for thirty years of human time in the person of Jesus of Nazareth, in the first century of our era, in Palestine. For the purposes of His saving work for the world that single life must somehow be universalised. Pentecost does this. It is the Return of Christ, no longer in the limited manner of bodily presence, but in the free, unlimited manner of spiritual presence, at many an altar, in many a group, in innumerable hearts. Such presence is recognisable only by faith. And by a higher quality of faith than has been demanded hitherto. It is true that to become a regular disciple in Galilee, to forsake all and follow, asked for a large and generous faith. But just to say, as the Temple officers said, "Never man spake like this man," was comparatively easy. It was, in fact, almost impossible not to be impressed by Jesus of Nazareth seen in the flesh. With the Ascension this all vanishes. Pentecostal belief makes great demands. To be converted to discipleship to a Lord who cannot be seen or heard, who is reported to be in heaven at the right hand of God and only apprehensible by the intangible links of spiritual communion, is much more difficult. To follow Jesus in Galilee demanded courage and faith, to be a Christian demands a far greater degree of courage and faith, together with insight, imagination and perseverance, and other qualities.

"He that is in you." The other thing to be said is this: "In you" means "in you all." Not in each separate one to an equal extent, because human capacities are unequal, but in the Spirit-born and Spirit-nurtured body. The Church is the Body of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the Breath of the Body. A man does not first become a Christian *in vacuo*, as it were, and thereafter

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takes the further step of joining the Church. He joins the Church, he becomes united with the Body of Christ, and thus he becomes a Christian. There are no Christians except those who are in some way united with the Body of Christ. There is no other way.

What did their faith do for them? This is best seen in practice in the former of the two letters to the Corinthians. Greek morals at this time were bad, and, in Greece, Corinth was a notoriously wicked city. Its port, Cenchreæ, had all, and more than all the vices of Port Said, and Corinth to these added the vices of a decadent culture. Yet even there the miracle was wrought." I have much people in this city" (Acts xviii, 10). St. Paul has a stinging catalogue of sins in 1 Corinthians vi, 9, and he continues:

Such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

They still had their weaknesses. Just as converted and baptized Central Africans, when there is a wedding in the tribe, sometimes forget their religion for a time and lapse into heathenism, after which they repent and confess and begin again, so these Corinthians had generations of paganism and loose-living in their blood, and sometimes lapsed. It appears from this letter that they were partisan and litigious, and that fornication was not unknown among them. It also appears that they were not fully instructed in the meaning of Christian marriage, in the sensible way of treating meat which had been used in heathen sacrifice and then sold at the back-door of the temple for food, in their general attitude towards idolatry and the pagan mysteries, in reverence at Holy Communion, in the use of spiritual

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gifts, and in the doctrine of the resurrection of the body. It is a long list of "sins, negligences and ignorances." On the other hand, the lists of spiritual gifts in xii, 4-11 and 28-30, the situation that lies behind the regulations laid down for control of spiritual gifts in chapter xiv, and above all the tribute of i, 4-9, prove abundantly that the address of the letter, to "them that are sanctified in Christ Jesus, called to be saints" (i, 2), is more than a polite formula. And this was at Corinth! A Roman satirist, a little later than St. Paul, said of the "hungry Greekling" that if you told him to climb into the sky he would jump to it. And of this material, at its worst, it became possible to say:

Not many wise after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God chose the foolish things of the world, that he might put to shame them that are wise; and God chose the weak things of the world, that he might put to shame the things that are strong; and the base things of the world, and the things that are despised, did God choose, yea and the things that are not, that he might bring to nought the things that are; that no flesh should glorify before God (i, 26-29).

They did not need to be informed, only reminded—"Know ye not?" vi, 19)—that their body was a temple of the Holy Ghost. "We have," says St. Paul in ii, 16, not as an item of new knowledge which he wants them to assimilate, but as the *datum* of a seriously built-up argument, "we have the mind of Christ." There must have been real spiritual quality in the people to whom the concluding words of the fifteenth chapter—

Wherefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord,

forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,

or the magnificent reassurement—

All things are yours; whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come; all are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's,

could be confidently addressed.

Another quite different triumph of apostolic faith is seen in the letter to the Romans. It may seem to be St. Paul's own faith rather than that of Romans. Yet St. Paul is a good journalist. He knows his public. He often works both their intelligence and their spiritual capacity rather hard, but it may be taken as a fact that whatever he thought it worth while to write to his correspondents would be such that they could make something of it.

In Romans he develops what may be called a philosophy of history. Any reasonably well-educated person to-day can turn off sentences like: "The Renaissance and the Reformation made modern Europe," or, "The British Empire is a new experiment in Empires," or "Hitler is Bismarck, with a difference." Anyone can say these things, because they have become the common-places of culture. Everybody knows them. St. Paul was dealing with a new situation. The key which he used to unlock the riddle of history and the meaning of progress had only just been forged. Christ was a novelty. And it is likely enough that His Excellency Theophilus or *Erastus the City Treasurer of Corinth*, who were perhaps the most highly placed and possibly therefore the best educated members of the primitive Church, would themselves have been startled by the audacity of

the apostle. It is certainly amazing. He explains the whole history of the world in terms of Christ. The Fall of Man pointed forward to redemption. The faith of Abraham made him the father not of Jews only but of all faithful souls, all who believe in Christ. The age-long conflict in man between the better and the worse can now be won:

O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me out of the body of this death? I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord (vii, 24, 25).

At the end of chapter viii he rises to his greatest height of eloquence. Nothing, not death, nor natural forces, nor diabolic powers, can put asunder what God in Christ had made one:

I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord (viii, 38, 39).

It has often been observed that in this catalogue of impotent barriers one thing is not mentioned—the human will. The divine government does not force conscience. Man is free.

The next three chapters, ix-xi, face what was to the writer, or to any converted Jew, a very difficult problem. It is, with changed names and circumstances, no less difficult to us. St. Paul's problem was that the Jews as a nation had not accepted the Messiah. "He came unto his own, and they that were his own received him not." What, then, of all the great promises of Scripture? What of the faithfulness of God? If He has cast off the Jews, how can we be sure that He will not cast off the Christian

Church? Various considerations are brought forward to meet this. They rather run into one another and overlap in the Pauline manner, but in the main they are as follows: The grand duty of man is to believe in, and accept the power of God. God has in the last resort the right to do what He will with men. The promises were always to some only. From Abraham onwards it was always a remnant which inherited. It is wonderful to think that others, Gentiles, the first-fruits of a far larger number than the Jewish nation, have been brought in. This will provoke the Jew to emulation. The ultimate purpose of God is to have mercy upon all.

When you consider that the writer had thought all this out in terms of a category which was quite new, where he had had no philosophical precedent, it is a great performance. When you further remember that all this was addressed to those who may be described as the readers of a parish magazine in a slum quarter of Rome, it becomes evident that the writer expected his friends to be interested in large problems. Whatever be the slight amount of truth in the gibe of a modern writer—

All that is required of the good Christian is chastity and a modicum of charity in immediate personal relations. An intelligent understanding and appraisal of the long-range consequences of acts is not insisted upon by Christian moralists¹—

it would have been wholly untrue of St. Paul.

What he says to the Romans has a clear relevance to modern Europe. It could be fitted to more than one aspect of the situation. One application is to Germany. The Germans—they would not like to hear it, but it is true—may in some respects be compared to the Jews of

¹ Aldous Huxley, *Ends and Means*, p. 209

the first century A.D. No one, except some among themselves, and that only on a very limited theology, has ever maintained that they are the sole recipients of divine Revelation. Yet they are a great nation, who have made in religion and culture (especially in science and the arts) an imperishable contribution to the treasures of the world. The man who has become their leader and their prophet has had an opportunity never before given to any of the sons of men to consolidate the happiness and security and freedom of mankind. Martin Luther and Friedrich Daniel Ernst Schleiermacher, Immanuel Kant and Albrecht Einstein, Johann Sebastian Bach and Ludvig van Beethoven have all been supreme German adventurers into the kingdom of truth. When Hitler might have spread *cultur* of this kind, he has kicked away the opportunity and has chosen to spread death, destruction and despair. Why? In order to accumulate power. His people have followed him in this. Is it not just to say that the Holy Spirit of Truth has come unto His own, and they who might have been His own received Him not? The problem that it creates for believers in God is expressed in Romans ix-xi. It is natural to quote xi, 8: "God gave them a spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear, unto this day." Is it possible also to quote the final conclusion? It runs: "For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgements, and his ways past tracing out."

The same gigantic range and grasp is seen in Ephesians. He there speaks of the place of Christ in the universe in language so tremendous, so all-inclusive that

it almost staggers even a comparatively mature Christian faith. It was the purpose of God, he claims, to sum up all things in Christ, not merely the events of history, but all things in heaven and earth. So far as mere human history is concerned, Christ has achieved the impossible. He has broken the age-long barrier between Jew and Gentile, and has united the two races into one new man. As men become more conscious of their true calling and obedient to it, the Body of Christ is more and more built up, and Christ is "fulfilled." But even man is not the last word of St. Paul. The vocation of the Church, the human Body of Christ, is to make known to the principalities and powers in the heavenlies the manifold purpose of God. Not only the world of men, but the world of spiritual beings is to learn Christ.

What an amazing contrast between this and the mild willingness of many modern people to discuss anything, so long as there are no fixed principles, and to allow that there may be something in Christianity. How is it possible to discuss life and death and sacrifice, and the meaning of good, and whether there can be such a thing as forgiveness, when all you can say about them is that "it seems to me that this is more probable than that"? That it is not impossible to have such barren discussion is proved by the fact that some people do it, but they are running round in circles. To St. Paul it is clear (and he has staked his life on the belief) that Christ has come sailing down from heaven and has established Himself in world-life as the Key which explains everything. The rise and fall of Empires, Assyrian, Babylonian, Persian, Macedonian, Roman, the development of civilisation, all that we have since learned to call Evolution, and also the future, whatever it may be, are

all part of a divine purpose, "the mystery of his will," which Christians are in a position to understand. We of to-day have become thoroughly accustomed to the idea that airmen, lifted high above the earth, can make reconnaissances over a large stretch of country, can see what is on the other side of the hills. St. Paul in the first chapter of this letter says that Christ has been raised and exalted into "the heavenlies." In the second chapter he uses almost the same language about believers. They are "quickened," "raised," "made to sit with Christ in the heavenlies," whence they can see and understand past, present and future. The man who wrote all this was a prisoner in Rome. His letter to the Ephesians may yet prove to be the clue to the future history of the world.

Two of the books of the New Testament have a good deal to say about the bearing of the Christians under actual persecution. 1 Peter, addressed to scattered communities in various parts of Asia Minor, enjoins readers not to think it strange that a fiery trial has come among them, but to take it patiently, and even to rejoice in it. Those who suffer for the name of Christ are sharers of the sufferings of Christ, and are described as blessed. Those who suffer as evil-doers win no glory, but to do well and to suffer for it is acceptable with God. The dominant note in 1 Peter is "Christ also suffered for us." With that is the thought that by suffering the metal of character is tried:

that the proof of your faith, being more precious than gold that perisheth though it is proved by fire, might be found unto praise and glory and honour at the revelation of Jesus Christ (1, 7).

The anonymous Epistle to the Hebrews¹ is the other persecution-document. The writer's doctrine of faith is remarkable. It is more philosophical than St. Paul's. Behind the outward appearance of the world there is an inner reality. The writer had been nurtured on Plato, and his Platonism is combined in the Alexandrian manner with Old Testament lore. He delights to remember that Moses was directed "to make all things after the pattern that was shewed him in the mount." With Plato he believes that there are eternal archetypes (*ideai*) of things, laid up in heaven, and he uses this to explain the sacrifice of Christ. The old rites were edifying and beneficent, but they could not be completely effective because they were wrought in a region of existence that has only a secondary degree of reality:

It was necessary therefore that the copies of the things in the heavens should be cleansed with these; but the heavenly things themselves with better sacrifices than these. For Christ entered not into a holy place made with hands, like in pattern to the true; but into heaven itself, not to appear before the face of God for us (ix, 23, 24).

"In the historical Jesus shadow and substance had become one."² Thus the faith which it is difficult for the Platonist to carry from the abstract air of philosophical idealism into the world as it is, had been made personal, and therefore easier. It was now held out to men by the hand of Jesus. He is the "author and perfecter of our faith," and the flawless example. Yet even He was "made perfect through suffering" (ii, 10). "Though he was Son, yet learned he obedience through the things which he suffered" (v. 8). His example is

¹ Possibly the work of Apollos

² A. E. J. Rawlinson and R. G. Parsons in *Foundations*, p. 196

supported by a long line of others, who "being dead, yet speak." The eleventh chapter is the classical catalogue of faith. The heroes of the Old Testament story were "moved with godly fear," they "endured, as seeing him who is invisible," they "went out, not knowing whither they went," they "chose rather to be evil entreated with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; accounting the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures of Egypt" (25-26), and in the end they "all died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them and greeted them from afar, and having confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things make it manifest that they are seeking after a country of their own" (13-14). The writer's analysis of faith is different from that of St. Paul. But, as with St. Paul, it is Christian faith, and its power in human life is the same.

We of to-day have been reminded by Sir Richard Acland in his searching little book *Unser Kampf* that practically all of us have some physical courage. In an air-raid we do not fall into panic. Those who are whole care for those who are injured, and take steps to repair damage. But there is, he says, another kind of courage:

The mental courage to think and proclaim new thoughts, and this kind of courage is required of us not only at the tense moments of action when sheer excitement comes to our aid, but all the time. Have we this kind of courage too?

This is the kind of courage of which the New Testament is full. Dr. Gilbert Murray pointed out a good many years ago that during the early Christian centuries conversion to Christianity was not unaffected by

temperament. But the difference did not go the way that some would suppose:

The minds that are now tender, timid and reverent in their orthodoxy would probably in the third and fourth century have sided with the old gods; those of more daring and puritan temper with the Christians.

The faith which made Peter and the Apostles in Jerusalem say calmly to the Grand Council of their holy nation, "we must obey God rather than men," also made Paul say to the Corinthians, "I will tarry at Ephesus until Pentecost; for a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries."¹ The insignificant provincial Jew, at the gates of the Imperial City, says, "I am not ashamed of the Gospel: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek" (Romans i, 16). In the same letter, after describing in round terms some of the incidents of persecution, he proceeds in the next verse to say, "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us" (viii, 37). Among innumerable other testimonies to the Spirit that inhabited them, here are two:

Who is he that will harm you, if ye be zealous of that which is good? But and if ye should suffer for righteousness' sake, blessed are ye: and fear not their fear, neither be troubled, but sanctify in your hearts Christ as Lord: being ready always to give answer to every man that asketh you a reason concerning the hope that is in you, yet with meekness and fear (1 Peter iii, 13-15),

and the rationale of it, which has been quoted before:

Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world (1 John iv, 4).

¹ 1 Corinthians xvi, 9 Notice "and" rather than "but".

Last of all in the New Testament comes the Fourth Gospel. Whether it was written by the son of Zebedee, or by an Ephesian, or, as many think, by one, not the son of Zebedee, who in his youth had been "a beloved disciple," it is, as readers of *A Death in the Desert* will know, the result of long musing during many years. It is, significantly and in a way surprisingly, a Gospel, a narrative. The writer, a theologian, if ever there was one, profoundly interested in theology, having theology to teach, elects to teach it in historical form. It shews the importance which he attached to the belief that the thing had really happened. He could have procured much greater vogue for his book among the intelligentia of his period if he had put his meditations in the form of a philosophical essay, and had been content to recommend his readers to be true to the divine spirit which is in us all. He might even have said—it would have been a distinctive and distinguished terminology—the Christ-Spirit. The Gnostics, who were the high-brows of the age, would have welcomed him as an ingenious ally. But it would not have been Christianity. And so he writes: "The Word became Flesh, and dwelt among us."

In spite of his insistence on the human reality, and even the addition by him of a few realist touches which are not found in the other Gospels, such as "Jesus, being weary," "Jesus wept," his Christian philosophy is, if possible, even more audacious than that of St. Paul. In one way circumstances helped him a little. He was later in date. The ship of the Church had by that time sailed out from the circumscribed waters of the Jewish harbours where it had begun life, and was now on the wide sea of the world. It was beginning to confront Gnosticism

as a serious rival for the spiritual and intellectual suffrage of mankind. The material advantage of the period was that by this time the Church was a little larger and more organised than in St Paul's day. But the claims are colossal. The Evangelist says nothing of original sin, or of the course of Jewish history from Abraham or of human history from Adam, or of the Biblical and philosophical problems created by the defection of the Jews, in so many words. But he is thinking all the time in the largest possible terms. His language is what is called "absolute." As he speaks of "the Father," so he speaks of "the Son," and he defines the Son in the Prologue as the Word, and later as the Lamb of God, the Light of the World, the Bread of Life, the Door, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, and finally the Way, the Truth, the Life.

This is the culmination of the faith of the New Testament. The Johannine method of teaching faith in God is to say, "Look at Jesus. See what He does. Hear how He speaks. Learn what His character and nature are. Do you not think that that is the best possible, that there could not be anywhere at any time anything better than that? Very well, *God is like that*. The office of the Son is to reveal the Father."

This is the faith to which Christians are committed, and have pledged themselves. It is hard to hold on to it. It is harder than ever at a time when bombs are flying, men are lying dead or wounded, cities and villages are being burned and broken, when it is a soldier's duty to be destructive of life and property, when the emotions of hatred and vengeance are stirred and brought near to the surface. A few here and there are still pacifists, condemning war as the worst of sins, which may in no

circumstances be undertaken. But for the vast majority who are sure that the war must be prosecuted with all the strength that is possible, how hard it is to maintain the faith that the Lamb of God is King of the World! Charles Kingsley, who had visited Bermondsey during the cholera epidemic in 1849, and had seen the appalling quality of the water which the people were drinking, wrote to his friend J. M. Ludlow: "If I had not had the Communion at Church to-day (Sunday, December 30th, 1849) to tell me that Jesus does reign, I should have blasphemed in my heart, I think, and said the devil is King." It is hard in war-time, above all as the needs of war grow more insistent, when war fills the sky and darkens the earth, to believe that Christ all the time is King, to believe what Henry Scott Holland said in 1914:

Behind all the wild and stormy scene, we shall see not Hate but Love, not War but Peace, not the cruel Adversary but a Lamb slain. A Lamb is on the throne, after all. Everything yields to that. Nothing has escaped that rule and control. Wraths, Judgements, Invasions, Plagues, Ruins, Wars—these all work under a prevailing purpose that makes for the divine Peace. They all pass under the Lamb. They all end in the Lamb. They all are bent to serve His purpose—they all must find themselves, at last, interpreted and justified by the Cross of Jesus Christ. His Gentleness, His Meekness are stronger than the strong. His Love is more masterful than the tyrannies of wrong. It will break them at last like a potter's vessel. It will bruise them in pieces under a rod of iron. That love holds in it the power of final victory. It will burn the chariots with fire. They shall shrivel and perish in the flame of the Wrath of the Lamb. Peace is the last word of God. It all works out towards the Day when they shall not hurt or destroy in all my Holy Mountain, saith

the Lord. This is the Secret at the heart of things. This secret can never fail to come to its own. The Lamb is on the throne.

And yet that is Christian faith.

It is not desired at this point to look ahead too much, to attempt to imagine the ultimate victory of grace. Some even are repelled by the idea of it. The anarchist Gregory in G. K. Chesterton's fascinating and profound book *The Man who was Thursday* said in the end, when all the six desperate warriors found that they had been chasing their own tails, like kittens, that he did not like ultimate reconciliations. Many of us know what he meant. It is perhaps true that the ultimate reconciliation is not only outside our experience, but outside what we can ever or should ever understand. This life is a life of struggle and of faith, a stage on which to travel hopefully. Christ touched the world once with perfection, to shew that perfection is a real thing, not a mirage. But we are intended to strive.

CHAPTER FIVE

FAITH THROUGH THE CENTURIES

THE story of faith is the whole story of the faithful. All that is possible in this chapter is to take a few snapshots here and there, to illustrate the range and power of Christian faith, and then to ask if it is still true.

I

Let the first be from the Age of Persecution. Persecution for the mere crime of being Christian did not begin at once. The Roman Empire was tolerant, especially in the matter of local or national religions. The city of Jerusalem was sacked and burned by Titus in A.D. 70, but that was because the Jews had been politically turbulent. The Jews were not persecuted. That, alas! only began in Christian times. The deliberate persecution of Christians by the Empire, and the attempt to destroy Christianity were found essential when it was realised that Christ or Cæsar was the inevitable alternative. The Church was too formidable to be neglected. It must therefore be stamped out. It proved too strong to be stamped out. It became stronger than ever. Early in the fourth century the Emperor Constantine was converted, and terms, apparently favourable but in reality calamitous, were made.

During the persecutions, which were very far from being continuous, tortures of which it is hardly possible

to think without nausea, were applied to men and women. Some were thrown to lions, or enclosed in nets and put at the mercy of savage bulls. Victims were crucified, and on the cross beaten with rods until their bowels gushed out. Others were torn limb from limb by huge catapults. A Christian servant of the Emperor Diocletian was scourged to the bone, and then made to watch fragments torn from his body burned on a gridiron. Others were slowly roasted, or, more mercifully, scorched with melted lead poured down their backs. Women were tied to trees by one foot, and then left to die. Others were violated first and then burned or devoured by lions.

How did they meet this? A few were base enough to betray their brothers. There were some *libellatici*, those who procured certificates that they had offered sacrifice to the gods. Their weakness created a problem for the Church when persecution had died down. It is discussed with wisdom and generosity in Cyprian's *De Lapsis*. Some of them were paralysed with fear. The best of them overcame both fear and hatred with marvellous success. They endured their pains and died in charity with their tormentors. Ignatius, Bishop of Antioch early in the second century, implores his friends at Rome not to use their influence to prevent his martyrdom. He desires, as he says, to "live." Let them not cause him to "die." Truly in this the melancholy wondering of the disillusioned Euripides—"Who knows if life be death and death be life"—has received a new and startling illustration. A little later the aged Polycarp, Bishop of Smyrna, was pressed by the procurator to blaspheme Christ and save himself. "Eighty and six years," he replied, "have I served Christ, and He has never done me wrong. How

can I blaspheme my King who saved me?" It happened that there were no more beasts available, and the mob clamoured that he should be burned. Wood was torn down by willing hands from shops and houses. Polycarp was stripped, and as they were about to nail him to the stake, he said: "Leave me as I am. God will grant me to endure the stake unmoved." They then tied him with cords, and he prayed:

O Lord God Almighty, the Father of Thy well-beloved and ever-blessed Son, Jesus Christ, by whom we have received the knowledge of Thee . . . I thank Thee that thou hast graciously thought me worthy of this day, and of this hour, that I may receive a portion among the martyrs, in the cup of Thy Christ.

The story of Perpetua, aged twenty-two, mother of an infant, and Felicitas, who was in an advanced state of pregnancy, is a classic. Perpetua's old father implored her to give way and so save her life and his happiness, but she felt that it would be at the price of her soul. Felicitas was delivered of her child in the prison, while waiting for her death. She groaned aloud, and the gaoler said to her:

If you cannot endure these pains, what will you do when you are thrown to the beasts? "I suffer now alone," she replied, "but then there will be One in me who will suffer for me because I shall suffer for Him."

The two women, fastened in nets, were gored by a bull, and finally put to death by stroke of sword.

The psychology of this is hard to analyse, though there is unhappily more material available to-day than there has been for a long time. We do not know the full story of the German attempt to stamp out everything

that is not willing to sell its soul. But we know the story of Dr. Niemöller, the heroic pastor who had fought for Germany from 1914-1918, who never claimed for a moment to dictate or even advise on the policy of the Government of his nation, but refused utterly to be told by the Government what Christianity was. He is far from being the only one. In that most moving little book *I Was in Prison* forty-two extracts are given from the letters of imprisoned pastors to their congregations or families. There is no complaint, no repining, no self-pity. There is a continual, glowing exhilaration at the opportunity of testifying for Christ. We did not know before, they say in letter after letter, what Christ could really be, and what the Bible promises really meant. We see now.

The exhilaration of the early martyrs was like that. The little company who died with Perpetua and Felicitas—

marched in procession from the prison to the arena as if they were marching to heaven, with joyous countenances, agitated rather by gladness than fear. Perpetua followed, with radiant step, as became a bride of Christ, the dear one of God.

In this exhilaration, although the deliberate courting of martyrdom was forbidden by Church authority, there was doubtless some obstinacy, or even some pig-headedness. They had chosen their path, and they would shew the world that nothing could turn them from it. But this spirit, if there is nothing more, does not outlast the beginning of the pains of death by torment. The constancy which impressed Justin the philosopher and made him first a Christian and eventually himself a martyr,

was much more than that. It was a consciousness of an indwelling Person: "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me." Charles Kingsley expressed it:

Do I feel much pain?

Not much. Not maddening. None I cannot bear,

It has become like part of my own life,

Or part of God's life in me—heaven—bliss!

I dreaded madness, and instead comes rest.

There have been other rolls of martyrs, Jews in the Maccabæan wars, and in the mediæval persecutions, and the faithful of other faiths. But in none of them has the sense of an indwelling Person been so strong. In the early Christian centuries, among the Protestant and Roman Catholic martyrs of the sixteenth century, among the Chinese Christians in 1900, and, as we shall learn more certainly in due time, in modern Europe, *Christ has re-affirmed His presence with His candidatus exercitus*, the noble army of His martyrs.

II

Consider Athanasius, the inspirer, not of the *Quincunque Vult*, the Augustinian document to which his name has strangely become attached, but of the Nicene Creed. It is imagined by some that he must have been a man with a lust for definitions, that he could not be content till he had reared pyramids of doctrine on the apex of a single text. In fact, he was a defender of the poor man's Saviour. Arius, his opponent, took advantage of the fact that since the adhesion of the Emperor Constantine to the Christian faith, large numbers of semi-converted pagans had been flocking into the

Church. They had been nurtured on the old Greek stories of the gods. They had heard, for example, the legend that Apollo, one of the young gods, had lodged for a time in the household of Admetus and Alcestis. They were naturally disposed to define Christianity in terms of these old myths, to regard Christ as no doubt far better than Apollo, but not very different in kind, a junior god. To such persons Arianism, with its doctrine, strange and wholly incredible to modern minds, of a Being who was to be called divine, but was less perfectly divine than the Father, was natural and easy to believe. Athanasius, believing that Christ had brought redemption to man, knew that a Redeemer could only bring that which He possessed in His own right. A demi-god might be a Leader, a Teacher, an Inspirer, a Captain of mankind, but not a Saviour. A divine Saviour of mankind must have a foot in both worlds, the divine and the human.

For this reason Athanasius swept away with burning logic not only the suggested Arian compromise of *Homoiousios*, "of like essence with the Father," but even the well-meant suggestions of the "Conservatives," that it would suffice to repeat the pre-Arian watchwords of faith. A new term must be found. He was not even dismayed by the fact that his essential term *Homoousios*, "of the same essence," was non-Scriptural. When the meaning of Scripture is in dispute, some external term must be brought in to define it. Thus by using arguments which were beyond the full comprehension of the plain man, he saved the plain man's faith. There must be some who will do this. The plain man, say the sailor, or the soldier, will not understand will not think about, will not care about, the problem

of theology. Here is a reminiscence, lately published by "Bartimæus," of a temporary naval padre whom he encountered in a cruiser some years ago:

Mr. Wells, Freud, Frazer, any of them could have knocked the bottom out of most of our little padre's beliefs—to their complete satisfaction—in a jiffy. But that is not the point. His flock on board that weather-beaten cruiser were not greatly concerned with ritual or dogma. It was goodness we wanted contact with, merely reassurance from some one who radiated the simple uncomplicated Truth—which we know—which all humanity knows in its heart to be the Life.

It is perhaps a little hard to include Sir James Frazer, with whom the present writer has often worshipped in the Temple Church, in the list, but the sailor's main point is that simple sons of the sea do not vex their minds with abstruse questions of theology, but are pervious to the appeal to goodness. Nevertheless, somebody must do the thinking. As Lord Balfour pointed out long ago in his *Foundations of Belief*, Arianism would have inflicted "irremediable impoverishment" on the Christian Faith. Athanasius perceived this, and resisted it. And the Nicene Creed, which originally began with "We believe," has remained ever since not only the supreme statement of the Christian faith whenever a full recital of it is required, but the confession of it which Christians have always used at the most solemn occasion of the worship of God.

There is one more noteworthy thing about the Nicene Creed: It was constructed by theologians, but it owes its authority to its acceptance by the whole Church. The test of what is called *œcumenicity*, or universality, is not the eminence, not even the representative character of the Council which formulated a

creed or definition, but subsequent acceptance by the faithful. Thus there are certain Canons passed at Nicæa which have not come to have universal authority.¹ The Creed of Nicæa has been reaffirmed by the unchanging custom of every generation since it was first born.

III

The mediæval heroes of faith moved in a different world. The vast majority, the orthodox, had no persecutions to face. The occasional heretic was savagely handled, but the motive of his persecution was political as well as religious. The Albigensians and the Waldensians on the Continent, the Lollards in England, were thought of as rebels against the accepted social order, as indeed they were. They had some strong right on their side, and their story moves the sense of both compassion and of justice. Their treatment has had the unhappy effect of thrusting left-wing politics on the whole into an attitude of opposition to the Church. Yet the thing that they stood for was not in all respects the Christian religion. The surgeon's knife which they proposed to apply to traditional institutional religion was not the perfect instrument of God. It is impossible to do otherwise than condemn and repudiate their treatment, but it is a good thing that they did not prevail.

Meantime, the orthodox, within their region of ideas, which was in some respects broad and spacious, in others sadly limited, developed the faith of the mediæval man. It was for the most part a strange mingling of genuine

¹ One of these is that the faithful should not kneel in church during Eastertide, but should pray standing.

desire for the glory of God and fear-haunted superstition. Sometimes it touched great heights of renunciation and devotion. Nearly all the names of those who achieved this are unknown. They were articulate to God and their immediate neighbours only. But some of them have communicated with posterity. We know that Benedict, Thomas à Kempis, Julian of Norwich, were souls who penetrated deeply into the secrets of the mystical union with God. Others, Bernard and Francis, Teresa and Catherine of Siena, no whit less holy, also exhibited the bearing of their faith on common life in ways that captivated and overawed the world. Yet, inasmuch as the monastic life is not for everyone, it is better to choose examples from among kings, soldiers, statesmen, because their circumstances and their temptations were much more like those of most modern Christians than the lives of mediæval monk, friar, or nun.

Consider Alfred, King of Wessex. When he is a wandering fugitive, he is the pattern of all those who can still say to their oppressors:

I will even ask the mighty earl
That asked of Wessex men
Why they be meek and monkish folk,
And bow to the White Lord's broken yoke:
What sign have we save blood and smoke?
Here is my answer then.

That on you is fallen the shadow,
And not upon the name:
That though we scatter and though we fly,
And you hang over us like the sky,
You are more tired of victory
Than we are tired of shame.

FAITH THROUGH THE CENTURIES

That though you hunt the Christian man
Like a hare on the hill-side
The hare has still more heart to run
Than you have heart to ride.¹

When he is once more on a precarious throne and has gathered something of an army to fight against the Danes:

He broke them with a sword,
A little towards the sea,
And for one hour of panting peace,
Ringed with a roar that would not cease,
With golden crown and girded fleece,
Made laws under a tree.¹

When war was over and Guthrum had been baptized, and Alfred had leisure to begin the building up again of the ravaged English land and the broken, illiterate English people, he was the just, laborious, patriotic king. A little dull, perhaps, but an untiring worker for religion, justice and education. The king who sets at the head of his code of laws not merely the Decalogue, but the Golden Rule, and declares that man needs no other "doom" but this, is a son of faith.

Four centuries later, Louis IX of France, canonised as "Saint Louis," was the ideal Christian knight, devout, heroic, just, frugal, charitable, combining personal humility with an unfailing sense of royal dignity. A contemporary writes of him:

Before I recount to you his great deed and his chivalry, I will tell you what I saw and heard of his holy words and good teachings, that they may be found in their order to edify those who shall hear them. This holy man loved God

¹ G. K. Chesterton, *The Ballad of the White Horse*.

with all his heart, and imitated His works; and this appeared in that as God died for the love which He had to his people, he put his body at venture many times for the love which he had to his people, and he could have done otherwise if he had wished

When his ship struck a rock off Cyprus, the shipmaster advised him to escape. He said:

Sir, I have heard your opinion and the opinion of my people but now I will give you back mine, which is that if I leave this ship there are more than five hundred people on board who will stay in the isle of Cyprus for fear of their lives (for there is not one who does not love his life as I love mine) and who will peradventure never return to their own land Wherefore I had rather put my body and my life and my children in the hand of God than that I should do such hurt to so many people as are here.

Dante, but for the accident of time, would gladly have set Louis in the fifth heaven, that of Mars, with those who had died fighting for the true faith, and France, with a true instinct, has kept him in her memory at the side of Joan the Maid.

About the same time in England Simon de Montfort shared Bishop Grossetête's eager hopes and plans for Church reform. He was a prudent and far-seeing pioneer of constitutional government, the teacher of the first English king who ruled by law and Parliament, the king whose tomb in Westminster Abbey bears the motto *Pactum serva*. De Montfort had studied Grossetête's treatise on *The Principles of Kingship and Tyranny*, which was in fact written for his benefit. He was a man of imperious character who could not help dominating, and the adhesion of such a man to the cause of constitutional government was a conspicuous act of faith.

Nor was his faith only political. He was the champion of Christian righteousness. His armies at Lewes and Evesham had learned from their captain that the best way to spend the night before a battle is in thinking about the best things, in prayer and confession of sins. It did not there and then lead to victory, but the House of Commons, which has been sometimes subservient, sometimes incompetent, but on the whole one of the *Domini canes*, the Lord's watchdogs for liberty, was its fruit.

IV

Three hundred years later, at a time when Parliament was at its worst, a London citizen, who had been Chancellor of England, was a martyr for conscience sake. He was a new type of martyr, the cultured, witty Renaissance man, whose culture, wit and Humanism not only illuminated, but steadied his moral force. Thomas More had had a promise from the king that his conscience in "the King's matter" and his declared purpose to look "first unto God and after God unto him," would be respected. In point of fact, he always knew that his life hung on the thread of the king's will. Once, when the king had walked very affectionately with him in his Chelsea garden, he said to his son-in-law, Roper:

If my head could win him a castle in France (for then there was war between us) it should not fail to go.

No one has ever examined his conscience more narrowly. Once, when he had testified before a royal commission, and had declared his mind, he was "merry," and told Roper that "he had given the devil a foul fall."

At his arrest, he said, "I thank our Lord, the field is won." He was defeated by the perjury of Richard Rich and the cruelty of Henry. During the last months of his life, his whole study was "upon the passion of Christ, and mine own passage out of this world." At the end he said:

I am the King's true faithful servant and daily beadsman, and pray for his Highness and all the realm. I do nobody no harm, I think *none harm but wish every body good*, and if this be not enough to keep a man alive, in good faith I long not to live. . . . My poor body is at the King's pleasure. Would my death might do him good.

He died, not for denying that the king was Supreme head of the Church, but because he would not positively swear that he was. He died because his burning faith in God made him believe in Church and liberty.

Another faithful man of that period was Hugh Latimer. He lacked the intellect of More, and his wit was rougher and more homely. He was, far more than the Lord Chancellor, a Bible man, and he learned from the Bible, where he began "to smell the word of God" at thirty, a true zeal for social righteousness and education. Like Amos, he denounced soulless, greedy courtiers, and those who kept back the wages of their hirelings, and, as Amos would have done if he had lived in the sixteenth century, he denounced "carnal gospellers," on the look-out for abbey-lands, or those who pocketed the monks' revenues and would not even found a poor boys' school with part of the money. He was an old man when he was burned under Mary, and he left the defence of the Reformed doctrines to Cranmer and Ridley, but he kept his faith to the end.

A quieter champion in the era of Elizabeth was

Richard Hooker. Oxford scholar, Master of the Temple, country parson, he did a great service to the cause of faith. He lived at a time when the old Latin text-books had been cast aside, and there was nothing, except what came from Geneva, to put in their place. He created Anglican theology, something neither Papist nor Puritan. He did this by beginning from the foundation. His doctrine of Church and Sacraments was founded on his doctrine of the Incarnation, and his doctrine of the Incarnation was tested at every point by reason. He called it Natural Law, "that which God doeth all things by." His majestic, rolling sentences are part of the riches of the English language, his theological principles have become classical in the Church of England, but his life was worthy of his gifts. He said himself that "the life of a pious clergyman is visible rhetorick," and Izaak Walton thus describes him in his parish:

As he seemed in his youth to be taught of God, so he seemed in this place to teach his precepts, as Enoch did by walking with him, in all holiness and humility, making each day a step towards the blessed eternity. And though in this weak and declining age of the world, such examples are become barren and almost incredible; yet let his memory be blest with this true recordation, because he that praises Richard Hooker praises God, who hath given such gifts to men; and let this humble and affectionate relation of him become such a pattern, as may invite posterity to imitate these his virtues.

His death is thus described by Walton:

About one day before his death, Dr. Saravia, who knew the very secrets of his soul (for they were supposed to be confessors to each other), came to him, and after a conference

of the benefit, the necessity, and safety of the Church's absolution, it was resolved the doctor should give him both that and the Sacrament the day following. To which end, the doctor came, and after a short retirement and privacy, they two returned to the company; and then the doctor gave him and some of his friends which were with him, the blessed Sacrament of the body and blood of our Jesus. Which being performed, the doctor thought he saw a reverend gaiety and joy in his face; but it lasted not long; for his bodily infirmities did return suddenly, and became more visible, insomuch that the doctor apprehended death ready to seize him: yet after some amendment, left him at night, with a promise to return early the day following; which he did, and then found him better in appearance, deep in contemplation, and not inclined to discourse, which gave the doctor occasion to inquire his present thoughts: to which he replied, "That he was meditating the number and nature of angels, and their blessed obedience and order, without which peace could not be in heaven: and oh that it might be so on earth!"

He was an intellectual giant, but his chief ornament was in "the hidden man of the heart, in the incorruptible apparel of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price."

More stormy than Richard Hooker was George Fox:
 "I felt the misery of my fellow-creatures separated from the divine harmony, and it was heavier than I could bear and I was crushed down under it."

He was cruelly persecuted, and was sustained by what he called "the power of the Lord." At Ulverston he was beaten out of his senses by a mob. He lay unconscious, and then:

"the powers of the Lord sprang through me . . . so that I stood up again in the strengthening power of the Eternal

God; and stretching out my arms amongst them, I said with a loud voice, 'strike again; here are my arms, my head, my cheeks'."

A man struck him violently on the hand with a staff, so hard that the bystanders cried out that the hand would be maimed for life. But Fox writes:

"I looked at it in the love of God (for I was in the love of God to all them that had persecuted me), and after a while the Lord's power sprang through me again, and through my hand and arm, so that in a moment I recovered strength in my hand and arm, in the sight of them all."

Fox was a lover of justice, toleration, peace, a hater of oppression. He believed, as a disciple has recently said of him, in God as "a reality always ready to break through the veil of our blindness." Very few people have ever made less compromise with faith.

Old Dr. Johnson made some compromise. He was lazy, greedy, and he clung to his prejudices and antipathies. Yet there is something heroic in the scholar who, as Carlyle puts it, "worshipped at St. Clement Dane's in the era of Voltaire," and there is something very moving about his humility in the market-place at Lichfield, his Good Friday fastings, his devotion at his Easter Communion, his self-accusing prayers.

V

From the last century let two patterns of faith be chosen. Frederick Denison Maurice spent his life in the attempt to see everything *sub specte aeternitatis*. It is remarkable that a man who dreaded committees and practical steps of any kind because they were human

devices should nevertheless have been a pioneer in Women's Higher Education, the Education of working men, the Co-operative Movement, and what is called Christian Socialism. His real work was in the field of theology, where he called himself a "digger" or searcher for the true foundations. His master-principle was that God is the great Reality, and that the business of man is to seek the divine truth and obey the divine order of the world. Mere human ingenuity was founded on sand and would come to nothing. One of his disciples, Llewellyn Davies, wrote that he caught at the Co-operative principle—

as putting to the England of the day the point-blank question, "Is human life, as it is now and as it has been in the past, founded by the Maker's design upon selfish and competitive instincts or upon the law of mutual help and fellow-work?" He could not endure that the question should be put in this form—"ought not human life *to be* founded on the principle of mutual help?" The distinction between the two forms was a vital one. The notion that wise and good men were set to work to make an improved society out of their own ideas was one which he repudiated with all his energy, and he did not care what bewilderment the repudiation might cause.

It is a superb illustration of faith in the truth of God that he should have ended his two volumes on *The Kingdom of Christ* with the words:

I am not ignorant, also, that the hints which I have offered in opposition to systems, may, themselves, be turned by myself or by others into a system; and that neither its weakness and inconsistency, nor the insignificance of its originator, may prevent it from connecting itself with some new party. I believe that some of whom I have spoken in

this chapter began to fulfil their mission with as sincere a desire that their words might never become the symbols of a faction as I can feel now. I do not, therefore, confide in myself. But since a school, which should be formed to oppose all schools must be of necessity more mischievous than any of them; and since a school which pretended to amalgamate the doctrines of all other schools, would be, as I think, more mischievous than that, I do pray earnestly, that if any such schools should arise, they may come to nought; and that, if what I have written in this book should tend even in the least degree to favour the establishment of them, it may come to nought. On the other hand, if there be any thing here which may help to raise men above their own narrow conceptions and mine, may lead them to believe that there is a way to that truth which is living and universal and above us all, and that He who is Truth will guide them in that way—this which is from Him and not from me, I pray that He will bless. "Let all thine enemies perish, O Lord": all systems, schools, parties which have hindered men from seeing the largeness, and freedom, and glory of thy kingdom; "but let them that love thee," in whatever earthly mists they may at present be involved, "be as the sun when he goeth forth in his strength."

The last example shall be that of Mrs. Josephine Butler. A delicately-nurtured lady, wife of a Cathedral Canon, she felt herself called to a crusade. The Contagious Diseases Acts (1864, 1866, 1869) were part of a State Regulation of vice. Mrs. Butler went out into the world and fought them. The Government was hostile; Parliament was indifferent, even contemptuous; the rank and file of well-intentioned but ill-informed people were uncomfortable at the handling of such topics by a lady; evil-disposed persons used constant intimidation and violence. Her life was often in danger. A newspaper

spoke of "the clamour of these indecent mænads." At last she prevailed. One of the members of a Royal Commission in 1870, speaking of Mrs. Butler's evidence, said, "I am not accustomed to religious phraseology, but I cannot give you my idea of the effect produced except by saying that the influence of the Spirit of God was there." The Acts were suspended in 1863 and repealed in 1886.

VI

A series of historical testimonies will perhaps provoke the comment that it may have been all very well then, but things are different now. Let us face the problem: Can a sailor, soldier, or airman on active service retain and practise Christian faith? An elderly Dean, living in a Cathedral Close, even though he may have to concern himself with A.R.P. for his Cathedral, and some other hard, practical affairs, is no doubt right if he concludes that his own best work is likely to be done by the meditation of his heart, the bending of his knees, the words of his lips, and by the fingers that hold his pen. What right does it give him to dictate to the young men who are exhausting their strength and venturing their lives in order that there may still be an England? No right whatever to dictate. For any purpose short of that he has only the right which Polonius has to offer counsel to Laertes, together with such right as a Christian priest has to commend what he believes to be the truth.

There is one element of realism which has to be taken into consideration, the fact that there are but twenty-four hours in the day, and that, if some of these hours

are not spent in eating and sleeping, the physical organism will cease to work. Military necessity is liable on occasion not only to take up all the hours that are left, but to intrench seriously on the times of food and sleep. This means that the recollection, whether of religion, or of home, or of literature, or of whatever else may be of personal interest to the fighting man, is threatened by inexorable circumstances. Did not Sir Jacob Astley say before the battle of Edgehill, "Lord thou knowest how busy I must be this day. If I forge Thee, do not Thou forget me. March on, boys!" This is undoubtedly one of the facts of warfare. Not only is the individual absorbed in concentration on his task of fighting, but the padre, the man whose duty it is at all times to promote religion, may at any time be told by the C.O. that the proposed religious service is in the circumstances impossible. The padre at once submits, both as a matter of army duty and also in conscience, because "our prayers" must not be allowed to endanger other men's lives. Yet there is much evidence that C.O.s are well aware of the help that the padre, not merely as a sound man with a wholesome, steadying influence, but as a minister of the means of grace, can and does give, and are eager that every possible opportunity shall be at his disposal. Of these he takes full advantage, and in his holy cause he becomes an adept in the art of "scrounging" opportunities. The *Daily Telegraph* of June 8th, 1940, contained a remarkable article by C. B. Mortlock, describing not only the devoted and indeed heroic work of padres with the B.E.F. in Flanders, but this incident:

A chaplain who celebrated Holy Communion on the sand dunes at Dunkirk had his congregation scattered five times

by fierce low-bombing attacks, but after each assault they reassembled and he took up the service where it was broken off, except that all joined in thanksgiving for their safety and prayer for the wounded and the dead.

It is not true that amid the stress of war religion vanishes.

On the other hand, it is certainly true that to a great extent the practice of Christian faith during an actual battle must be of a general, diffused kind, shaping and colouring, and, it may be, even inspiring, but not hindering the concentration that the business of the moment requires. The recollection of God and of the Peace of God will itself be terribly hindered by the terrible nature of the duties which he must discharge. That these do not have a hopelessly brutalising effect on character is a magnificent testimony to the essential goodness of British young manhood. Let us not dally here in a fool's paradise. It is not to be supposed that the war-worn members of the B.E.F., spending a few days in a Cathedral city, and chatting to a Dean in or around the Cathedral, reveal to him everything that they feel, or express what they do reveal in the precise language which might fall from them at other times. They are too courteous, too considerate for that. Nor is it to be supposed that the volume of unison melody produced by a large number of male voices and some A.T.S. sopranos filling a great nave on Sunday morning with the strains of "O God our help in ages past" represents more than a slight, ill-formulated faith in very many of those who contribute to the sound. Yet anyone who has been in Holy Orders nearly forty years and has been acquainted with thousands of people, is likely to have some power of using the experience and imagination which he possesses. Let us attempt to

analyse what a young Englishman in uniform rightly and naturally believes.

One soldier, in the autumn of 1939, replied to the passing salutation of a friendly lady, "How can you say 'good-night' and 'God bless you' to a hired murderer?" He probably put it in the harshest terms in order to make an issue clear to himself, and it may well only have been the early reaction on first becoming a soldier. Not a few pass through such a stage. As soon as they settle down almost without exception the young soldiers seem to regard war as a horrid thing into which their nation has unhappily been drawn. They have been called by the deliberate act of the State to serve as combatants. In that capacity they are prepared to obey orders, even to the end. But they have needed some time to become inured. One young man, who laid down his office pen in September 1939 to join his Territorial unit, said to a friend, "Good-bye, I'll do my best. In defence, not in attack." It was a good and charitable intention, but there is no doubt that he has long since discovered that it is impossible. It is still true, as Ruskin said long ago, that the supreme duty of a soldier is to be willing to die rather than to be cowardly or false, but it is also true that to kill is one of the things which he must do. The vast majority of them, averse from bloodshed, have steeled themselves to accept the necessary *moratorium* of their usual standards.

Meantime, their faith that the world is governed by the hand of God, even if it is shaken by their observation of the power of mechanical strength, and of the advantages conferred, at least at the beginning, by unscrupulousness, is restored by the recollection that they are in partnership with God. This is a genuine thing. And it

is not merely that rather dangerous emotion, righteous indignation. There is such a thing as righteous indignation, and it is likely to be at its best when it is felt on behalf of others. Yet it easily passes into hatred. That is why it is dangerous. But it is not the only emotion felt by British fighting men. There is a sense—often simple and crude—of being instruments on the side of decency, that is, ultimately, instruments in the hand of God. That is why the British soldier who falls in battle is in the true martyr-class. He dies, not as a non-religious, conscientious rebel might, in angry useless protest against a system which has grown up among his own fellow-countrymen, which is trying to seduce his allegiance, but in the belief, often but vaguely held, that his death is a contribution to a Good Cause.

The member of a small unit, even the commander of a small unit, has abundant practice in realising that, *even though he does not see the purpose of a movement*, it is in accordance with a plan which higher authority has made. He forms the habit of trusting Lord Gort, or his own divisional commander. As children argue from the earthly to the heavenly Father, which in spite of Freud is no bad thing, so soldiers can argue from a campaign to a universe. The thought of oppressed nations, the sight of homeless, hopeless, helpless refugees, hatred of the idea of the German Gestapo administering London, Oxford, Cambridge, Stratford-on-Avon, Old Trafford and Epsom Downs, remind him that Freedom is the Law of God. The recollection of Non-Aggression Pacts broken at convenience reminds him that Truth is the Law of God. The revulsion of his conscience when he sees companies of fleeing civilians machine-gunned from the air stamps deeper in him the conviction that

Compassion is the Law of God. The thought that must often visit him that perhaps he himself will not survive inspires him to accept life, or the withdrawal of it, as a gift and a vocation, and to think of what he or someone else who shares his beliefs will have to do for a new world when war is over.

It would seem that the Nazi fighter is supported in his corresponding task, which our men are making as difficult as they can for him, by his natural courage and by his religious feeling about Germany and the Fuhrer. The modern world has seen remarkable examples of the power of militant Nationalism, and it would be rash indeed to set limits to what can be achieved by natural courage. But Nationalism of the kind that flourishes in Germany has two weaknesses: It includes, or in extreme cases consists of, an appeal to hatred as a motive, a fact which poisons its quality and makes for self-destruction in the end. Also it depends not a little for its continuance on success or the prospect of success. The British soldier is incapable of hatred on the grand scale. It would seem to him ridiculous. If he were tempted he would make some joke about it, and recover his balance. As for success, of course he hopes for it, as any soldier would, but the kind of success for which he hopes is a world-condition in which, as he might put it, everybody will have a chance. He does not think of frontiers as lines to be obliterated by his conquests, but as lines over which it would be interesting to pass freely in peacetime and observe the curious and amusing people who live on the other side. In all this there is the rich raw material of faith in God.

There is one other set of persons, already a large company, increasing every day, to whom faith is

of our Lord Jesus Christ. After all, Thomas Aquinas himself, even while he was building up his massive logical structure, was a staunch believer in Revelation, and was actually engaged in composing the Eucharistic prayers and hymns¹ which have made him the spiritual benefactor of millions who know nothing of Scholasticism. Our own Anselm of Canterbury was one of those who developed the famous Ontological Argument, *Quo maius nihil* (That than which no greater can be conceived must have an existence). It sounds barren, but Anselm all his life was a worshipper of the Living God, and he made great sacrifices for his faith. He was not creating his own faith by his own logic. He was reasoning about the faith which he had. Nevertheless, the tendency of the majority to-day is to use pure logic as a buttress rather than a foundation.

Passing into less abstract regions, we encounter the famous Argument from Design. Paley in the eighteenth century affirmed that the river-bed, so admirably adapted for the reception of the river; and the structure of the eye, so admirably adapted for the purposes of seeing, proved that a beneficent Creator had designed them so. Into this happy garden of belief a bomb is thrown by Darwin. The argument as it had been stated proved to be little better than the pious reflection of the simple old lady. She remarked that the Creator had mercifully arranged that there should be a considerable river running through every considerable town. The fact, of course, was that the river was there first, and that

¹ "Laud, O Sion, thy Salvation," *Pange Lingua* (Of the Glorious Body telling) "Therefore we, before him bending," "The word of God proceeding forth," "O Saving Victim" and "Thee we adore, O hidden Saviour, Thee"

is why the town grew up on its banks. In like manner, the river-bed was formed by the action of the river; and the eye is the result of innumerable experiments and selections. On the other hand, it may confidently be said that the argument remains in a larger and better form. There are many things—some vital things—which do not depend on selection. Let us suppose that it is true that the earth, with other solar planets, is a bit of the sun, flung off about five million million years ago. Anyhow, it proved to contain such things as oxygen, hydrogen, carbon, and so forth, which are essential to life. Water proved to possess certain properties, unlike those of other liquids, which are such as to make life possible. Things of that kind were not affected by anything that can be called Selection. Further, it appears that Evolution has actually produced beings who can criticise and control nature, and can construct an environment for themselves. They have invented clothes and houses, which, reinforced by a great variety of adjuncts, such as Fire Insurance Policies, Needles and Thread, the Householder's Handy Box of Tools, and an Anderson Shelter, enable them to defy to a considerable extent the forces of Nature. The production of ingenuity on this scale looks like a purpose not resident in Nature itself.

To many minds the moral argument is very strong. There are certain values, namely truth, goodness, beauty, which are appreciated by man, but seem to come from beyond man, and to have what Einstein, speaking of truth, has called "a super-human objectivity, independent of our existence and our mind." Where do these values come from? Idealists, from Plato onwards, reply that they come from God, the Sustainer

of Values and Ideals, that they represent something which is eternal, something in the mind of God.

The Argument from History, that on the whole the history of the world and of mankind shews an increasing purpose, appeals to very many. There have been many set-backs, things difficult or even impossible to explain at the time. It is sometimes possible to see afterwards that these were warnings that there was no way through in that direction, or, like Athens, the Roman Empire, the Middle Ages and the French Revolution, valuable but imperfect contributions towards an age-long plan.

Finally, there is psychology. Psychology cannot by itself say anything decisive about theological problems, any more than a study of the habits of fishes can tell you why water is what it is. But psychological investigation carries you to the end of a region, on the boundary of which you are confronted with Ultimate Reality. *Moreover, even within its own limits, psychology does good service by analysing and classifying religious experience.* Religious experience is not only of the exalted kind enjoyed by the great mystics like St. John of the Cross. It includes the whole life-experience of all religious people, their prayers, their habits, their belief that their religion helps their conduct, their behaviour when they are happy, or sad, or puzzled, or when they have done something wrong. The great bulk of it is thus of an ordinary, commonplace kind, not particularly thrilling, but very hard as evidence to dispose of. It includes, however, the whole of what is called mysticism, or the sense of being united with the eternal. The word "numinous" has lately been invented to describe persons, or places, or rites possessing a certain mysterious unearthly quality, which is at the same time awe-

inspiring and attractive. Joan of Arc, George Herbert, the Curé d'Ars, Mary Slessor, Bishop Edward King of Lincoln were numinous persons. Mount Sinai, the Mount of the Transfiguration, and many other hill-tops have been found to be numinous places; Holy Communion is a numinous rite. Many serious Christian thinkers attach great value to the argument from religious experience. Such experience, they say, is a persistent *datum*, which can only be invalidated at the prohibitive cost of denying many other great ranges of human experience. The whole truth seems to be that theology claims to be able to establish itself at a threefold tribunal, of reason, of history, and of spiritual experience.

The object of true religious faith, supported by these intellectual or intellectual-spiritual methods, is God conceived as Personal. It would be inadequate to say that God is *a Person*, because that would seem to involve the limitations to which the human personality is subject. It is better to say that in God there is Personality. Personality means character. God can make a disclosure of Himself to man, can love and be loved. This rules out Deism or belief in the Divine Artificer who once upon a time created the world but has lost interest in His creatures; and Pantheism, the belief that the sum-total of the universe, including oneself, can poetically be called God. It rules out these, and it brings in all that rich and fruitful circle of ideas which is involved in such expression as, "Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?" or, "I was not disobedient to the heavenly vision," or "You did not choose me, but I choose you," expressions which shew that God knows and cares about the individual.

These expressions are all taken from the literature of

Christianity. That is where this personal conviction chiefly appears. It is, of course, abundantly true that Judaism, ancient and modern, has a robust personal faith, and I have been assured by those who know that the devotional literature of Islam contains mystical poems and prayers of a high spiritual quality. Yet it will be generally conceded that the brunt of the battle for religious faith against unbelief, secularism and godlessness falls on Christianity.¹ It is Christ who has brought God near and has caused God to be apprehended as personal. Very many people—of whom I am one—find that in spite of a belief, which is more than purely intellectual, in the presence of God everywhere, yet it is hard not to be daunted at least sometimes by the sense of God's remoteness. He is there and I am here. He is infinite and I am insignificant. He is universal and I am only one. He is everlasting and I am a creature of a day. How can I know that He cares for me?

There are good reasons for knowing this, but it is not always found easy to maintain a pure Theistic faith, what Browning called—

Naked belief in God the omnipotent.

Those who are Christians find that Christ comes to their rescue just where help is most wanted in the ways of life.

That is where help is most essential. It may be comparatively easy in the study, on the hill-top, or as the Arabs testify, amid the solitude of the desert, to

¹ What is called Unitarianism may be of various kinds. Sometimes it is a Socinian Christianity, interpreting certain verses of the New Testament in what orthodoxy calls a minimizing sense. Sometimes it rejects Christian theology much more completely than that, and its adherents are content to describe themselves as "disciples of Christ." But all, so far as I know, desire to use, what James Martineau, the most famous Unitarian of the nineteenth century, called "the much-loved Christian name."

believe in God. It is when you are puzzled, and not only puzzled but stricken and heart-broken by the things that happen in the world of men, that you need something that is expressed in terms of human life. There is a verse in the first chapter of St. John about the Baptist "looking upon Jesus as he walked." Up and down, in and out, in streets and across fields, and through the doors of cottages, the Son of Man among the sons of men. That is the kind of faith that is needed when homes are being devastated, and children are being crippled by machine guns or driven out of their minds with fear, while the father and bread-winner is lying dead in uniform on the battlefield a few miles away.

Let us do justice to Theistic faith. There are resolute minds which turn, and will always turn, whatever happens, to belief in the justice and righteousness of God. Even when it is unfortified by specifically Christian allegiance, the faith that "the mills of God grind slowly, but they grind exceeding small," is a true support to life. A Jew or Moslem, or any Theist who has felt unable to accept or perhaps has never effectively encountered Christian faith, can hold on to his conviction that God rules the world in righteousness, and that cruelty, oppression and treachery in the end defeat themselves. He can hold on to the even more vital conviction that in any case, even if they do not in our immediate experience defeat themselves, and before they have begun to defeat themselves, cruelty, oppression and treachery are wrong. In all this Theism is the firm ally of Christianity.

Yet a Christian can only avow his own conviction that Christ is the true and only satisfying answer to the riddle of life. When life for the time being contains

almost no hope, the Crucifix is the only symbol that covers the facts. All other faiths either fall away as fine-weather fancies or are too abstract, too remote to grasp. It is obvious that neither Apollo, nor Titania, nor Robin Goodfellow can save us. The vision of God in heaven, even though He be the Sustainer of the true Values, is elusive. Even Isaiah, with his strong faith, was compelled to say: "Verily thou art a God that hidest thyself." The help of the God within, superb, strange Source of courage and patience for so many, has this flaw in it. It is likely to wane with the natural exhaustion of the sufferer. But "the sublime poem of the Christ-life" is not only, as Mr. Galsworthy makes Jolyon Forsyth think in the Saga, "man's attempts to join these two irreconcilable conceptions of God," but, in the positive claim of the Logos-theology, is the revelation of the Bridge, the Mediator, and in the end the divine Sufferer. When actual damage is done to human life—damage which has first to be endured and then repaired, or damage like death which cannot be repaired and can only be endured, we need the divine Visitor, who comes from heaven, from the God above, and renews our puny little incarnations of the God within.

But there is something more. That He does come and that He is pitiful may perhaps be conceded. But is there power in Christ crucified? Is He really *Christus Victor*? This is what St. Paul positively asserts in Romans viii, 3, "God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh" (that is to say neither "in sinful flesh" nor "in the likeness of flesh"), and as an offering for sin, condemned sin in the flesh." Christ exercised the mightiest power that is known or can be conceived, the power of love. Even amid the ruins of all that has

seemed to make life worth living, deprived of all the material adjuncts which undoubtedly made life comfortable, crippled in body and perhaps dying, a Christian can still know that he is on a road which his Master trod and by treading has consecrated it for ever. He would not, of course, have chosen to suffer thus, and we should all wish to save our friends from suffering thus, but such suffering does not entail a denial of the Christian's faith.

It only reaffirms it. Nine years ago the writer used the words that follow to express the way in which the Crucified meets and explains the hard things of life. It can be readily imagined that the opening sentence could have been made much more emphatic if it had been written in 1940.

Are you puzzled by the inequality of life, by its hardness, by the indifference of nature and the incompetence of men to save themselves, by the silences of God? Burke nothing of all this. Look all the facts full in the face; feel their hardness; taste their bitterness. And then remember that, if ever there was a time when I was revealing to you what God is really like, it was the time when I was dying, nailed to the gallows. I represented there all the things in man which are most pitiful, and all the things in God which are most splendid. There was my inability to convert my persecutors; there was the tragic fact that the best suffer most; there was the treachery of it; for I was the Friend of the World, and they crucified me. In the same hour I represented the two things in God which are most wonderful, the things which none except God could have. I was pure love, loving even to the end, without limits. And I was pure belief in freedom. I did not save myself. I respected the conscience of Caiaphas and Pilate. I disdained the kind of argument which might have prevailed with them. I called for no

heavenly legions. I did not warn them to beware of blasphemy. I used no argument of fear, or self-interest, or common sense. I appealed to nothing except love.

The circumstances to-day are a hundred times more difficult. Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, to-day and for ever, is equal to the strain.

All this has rather assumed that failure and suffering will be the lot of the Christian. Is this Defeatism? On the contrary. It is following in the footsteps of *Christus Victor*. And yet in war-time the thought of suffering must be uppermost in our minds. And this for three reasons:

(i) War is in itself a sinful thing. No war can be holy, though a war can be both necessary and just. The purpose of a just war is to restrain wrong-doing, and a war which is undertaken for this purpose is just, if there is no other way. There was no other way this time because there is no recognised international authority which can restrain, as national authority can restrain within the nation. Nevertheless, to accept the arbitrament of war is to take lower ground; it is to consent to principles other than those of Christ. A thing which can be defended as the lesser of two evils does not actually become good. There is matter for penitence in the fact that our young airmen are obliged in war to smash the reinforcing columns, the supply-trains, the aerodromes, the ammunition-dumps, the oil-stores, the bridges and the railway-stations of the enemy; that our sailors and soldiers are obliged to launch death and destruction from their guns. On the night of June 12th, 1940, I heard over the wireless that one of our airmen in Africa had ended his report with, "All concerned enjoyed the raid very much." I heard this with an irrepressible

smile, a feeling of thankfulness and admiration for so brave a spirit, and something rather like a sob at the same time. What will be the end of these things?

Having quoted this Happy Warrior, I must set side by side with his gay *insouciance* the noble letter of an airman to his mother, which has been reprinted from *The Times* of June 18th, 1940. He says:

My death would not mean that your struggle has been in vain. Far from it. It means that your sacrifice is as great as mine. Those who serve England must expect nothing from her; we debase ourselves if we regard our country as merely a place in which to eat and sleep. . . . To-day we are faced with the greatest organised challenge to Christianity and civilization that the world has ever seen, and I count myself lucky and honoured to be the right age and fully trained to throw my full weight into the scale. For this I have to thank you. Yet there is more work for you to do. The home front will still have to stand united for years after the war is won. . . . You must not grieve for me, for if you really believe in religion and all that it entails that would be hypocrisy. I have no fear of death; only a queer elation. . . . I would have it no other way. The universe is so vast and so ageless that the life of one man can only be justified by the measure of his sacrifice. We are sent to this world to acquire a personality and a character to take with us that can never be taken from us. . . . I firmly and absolutely believe that evil things are sent into the world to try us; they are sent deliberately by our Creator to test our metal because He knows what is good for us. The Bible is full of cases where the easy way out has been discarded for moral principles.

(ii) Yet, for all this, the essential thing in war is not the desire to inflict harm on the enemy. The essential duty of the warrior is to offer his life, to be ready to die. The essential question for the civilians is: Can we bear

the suffering that will come to us? It seems to be true that, if the military strength of the opponents is not, as it was in Abyssinia, too hopelessly unequal, the side that can endure better will have the stronger soul, and will win in the end. If this is true, if the essential and, to a point, the redeeming feature of war is a capacity, not to inflict, but to endure suffering, the Christian is sent back in war-time more than ever to the Cross.

(iii) There is a further point. War is not waged in kid gloves, and there is no such thing as a gentlemanly war. Yet there are decencies, and scruples, and conventions, and points of honour which some combatant nations observe more than others. To defy these confers an initial advantage. To suffer from such defiance and to be tempted to emulate it is another reason for resorting in war-time to the Cross.

Yet the Cross is not all. Friday is followed by Saturday, and Saturday by Sunday. It is impossible to think of *Christus Victor* apart from the Resurrection. It has been said already on an earlier page that the Resurrection was not spectacular, and that Pilate and Caiaphas were not brought to believe it. It was a quiet declaration by the Heavenly Father that the way in which Jesus of Nazareth had faced life and had grappled with evil was the true way. It is possible for us, without being false either to Good Friday or to Easter, to look forward to a resurrection or spiritual victory. For the spiritual victory to which Britain looks forward is not truly described by the figure of a British heel on the neck of a conquered Germany. It is rather the arresting of an evil spirit of conquest, the abolition of a reign of fear which makes life dreadful for those who will not bow down and worship an idol. It is freedom for all.

We do not stand at the same level as the Crucified Lord, but infinitely lower. Not only are we driven to use means which He never used, but we could never stand where he stood, or do what He did. He, the Supreme Saviour with the world to save, wields the supreme weapon of pure love, the only one that penetrates into the heart of things, that operates at the deep level where the springs of action are found, where the world is moved. Yet even this He does by using the outward means that are at His disposal, His own life of flesh and blood. Just as He had before in His beneficent work of healing employed His human will and the touch of His human hands, so now He employs His human limbs in being crucified. True, He was non-resistent, but non-resistance is not the core and centre of His act, any more than His physical death constitutes His Atonement. The heart of what He did was the spiritual power that He poured into it. Our warriors are not, not even all of them together, saving the world. They do not wield the supreme weapon. They could not if they would. Theirs is a small piece of human duty, on a far, far lower plane, a duty which is in itself deplorable, and to them most distasteful. It does not save. It destroys. But when there is a wreck, the wreckage has to be cleared away before building can begin. That is what our men are doing. Because of that they can pour into their work a spiritual force which Christ gives to them. It has puzzled many war-haters in peace-time to learn that professional warriors can be so gentle as they are. That they are so is no argument for having war, only a reminder of what has in recent times become notorious, that soldiers, even in war-time, even on active service, can still be disciples of the Master.

The tangled, distorted, stricken, half-destroyed condition of the world makes it at first sight hard to have any kind of faith. The fact that our own people have been drawn into the destructive horror seems to make us false to our Master Christ. But the fact that the essential elements in war are danger and suffering and death allows us still to be of His allegiance, and indeed to understand and welcome Him better than we did when skies were calm. His is the only faith which could inspire us now. And even though the conditions of war compel us to inflict suffering, the Master can yet be heard saying to us: "I know, I understand. You wanted peace. Part of your reason was then ignoble, but much of it was not. Much of it was a true desire to save My world from war. Now you are in it. Your motives now are not ignoble. Some of them are no more than natural. You are fighting in part for self-preservation. That is an instinct which I have created in you. It is a natural instinct, though it is not the highest in your spiritual armoury. You have other motives, which speak of your neighbour, of the reign of righteousness, of My Kingdom and My Glory. Feed those desires, and I can then save you from hatred, cruelty and the lust of conquest. In your war you find yourselves compelled to kill and maim and destroy. These things I hate. Yet I have not ceased to love you and believe in you. You are using an instrument which is one of the instruments of My creation and My providential use from day to day, from moment to moment, the instrument of force, which in human life I did not use; a dangerous instrument which in the hands of man does not discriminate and may pass beyond control. The motives of such as use it sink easily from the better to the worse. By degrees,

as they could learn the lesson, I have taught My disciples that the power of life and death, which human strength possesses, is to be used only in the fear of God. By degrees I am making war obsolete. You find that it is the instrument which the present state of life in the world puts into your hands, and the only instrument which serves the honourable purpose by which you believe yourselves in the main to be controlled. The slowness of man's learning of the lesson of the true way of life is part of the burden of My Saviourhood. I am content, as always, to endure it. I have endured things harder to endure than this, with much less redeeming virtue. Once I was crucified, and always I am the Lamb of God. Now I condemn not, and still save to the uttermost. For you the call is to continue to know Me, as one of My servants has said to you, and the Power of My Resurrection, and the Fellowship of My Sufferings."

CHAPTER SEVEN

FAITH IN ACTION

THE man who behaves best in a crisis is the man with the best character. The best work is done by the man who has *most skill and is most highly trained*. In other words, the issue at any given moment is likely to depend on what has gone before. So the most satisfying faith is shewn from day to day by the man who possesses, or rather is possessed by, the right kind of permanent faith. A sudden spurt of confidence may come from various causes. It surges up, and then is spent. What we need is a faith that endures, which can be compared to the climate rather than to the weather.

Where does such faith come from? And what are the marks of it? It seems to me that the marks of it are five in number, and they shew clearly whence it comes.

(i) The right kind of faith finds a meaning in things, a purpose towards which mankind is gradually moving. You can never at any time see the whole of this. There are times when you see none of it. When Mary stood beside the Cross that Friday afternoon I do not know how much she saw of the meaning and purpose of it all. I should suspect that Thomas saw very little, that John saw much more than most of us would have seen, and that Mary saw most of all, because she was faithful, and loving, and holy. It is certain that even she could not possibly have seen the whole of it, because the whole of it is never visible. If you take a four-foot rule

in your hands and hold it at arm's-length, you can see it all. Hold it close against your eyes, and you will only see an inch or two. Human vision is like the second of these two ways of holding the stick. It never sees the whole.

The stick is only a partial illustration. Our failure is not only a failure to see far enough, but a failure to see deep enough. We only see the surface, but we can imagine a sort of spiritual X-ray which penetrates below the surface. Prophetic vision has something of this power, and it is possible by self-discipline to cultivate it. How shall we do this? There is an important passage in Mr. Aldous Huxley's *Ends and Means*, where he says:

In the democratic countries, intelligence is still free to ask whatever questions it chooses. This freedom, it is almost certain, will not survive another war. Educationists should therefore do all they can, while there is yet time, to build up in the minds of their charges a habit of resistance to suggestion. If such resistance is not built up, the men and women of the next generation will be at the mercy of any skilful propagandist who contrives to seize the instruments of information and persuasion. Resistance to suggestion can be built up in two ways. First, children can be taught to rely on their own internal resources and not to depend on incessant stimulation from without. . . . The other method of heightening resistance to suggestion is purely intellectual and consists in training young people to subject the devices of the propagandists to critical analysis. The first thing that educators must do is to analyse the words currently used in newspapers, on platforms, by preachers and broadcasters. . . . Resistance to suggestion can be heightened only by sharpening the critical faculty of those concerned. The art of dissociating ideas should have a place in every curriculum.

This is good, but it is too purely human. It is only

critical and negative. When we have hewn down the idols and punctured the balloons of propaganda, we shall not know what to do. There are, as I have hinted, two kinds of people who do know. There are a few with the capacity of taking a large and generous view. Just as a competent strategist can look round the world and can see what the effect of the German occupation of France, or increased munition-output in Canada and Australia, or a rising tide of conviction in U.S.A. is likely to have in six months time from now, so a prophet, that is, an inspired observer of events, can read something of God's purpose for the world.

But we cannot all be prophets in that sense. An Isaiah springs up only every now and then. "God has a few He whispers in the ear." Yet there is something that we can all do. We can all educate ourselves in reading the significance of the things that happen every day. It is not impossible to learn to be thankful for the sunshine, for the spring, for health, for home, for national, local, personal blessings. Soldiers, just before the attack at dawn, or after a wearisome night of watching by a bridge, are thrilled by the song of a lark in the sky, and perhaps even grateful for the chattering of the starlings. Such things are more appreciated when the going is not good. It is as it was in mediæval England. Nearly all English poetry smells of the spring. The *Canterbury Tales* begin:

Whan that Aprille with his shoures sote (sweet)

The droghte of March hath perced to the rote (root)—

and the *Vision of Piers Plowman* was seen—

On a May morewenynge

On Malvern hilles.

The reason for this preoccupation with spring is that in April or May the English people came out of the ill-built, ill-lit, ill-warmed and insanitary houses in which they had spent the winter, and walked and ran and danced under the sky. So to-day, when life is hard and compensations must be searched for, we can form the habit of looking for the Guiding Hand of God. I knew a man once who had greatly desired to take a First Class Degree at the University. He was placed, to his disappointment, in the Third Class. The result was that his work in life was different from what it might have been if he had taken high academic honours. He had not been able to see the justice of it at the time, but after twenty years of useful life, when I first knew him, he had come to understand something of why it was. This was simply a thing which had happened, and had to be accepted. Very often co-operation is needed. The act of God needs the obedience of man before it can come to pass. A woman many years ago nearly made what would have been a disastrous marriage. The engagement was broken off. A few years later she married a soldier, who died after a comparatively short married life. She has since lost two soldier sons by death, and the third is at this moment in peril. Yet she is a happy woman, because she did the right thing with her life. She is thankful for what God has given her. This points to the true method. The best way to increase the sense of awareness of God's guidance in life is to cultivate the habit of gratitude. Every time you are thankful it helps you to read the meaning of the next thing.

(ii) The right kind of faith is Christ-centred. Christ is, as Mr. Gladstone once said, "the central hope of our poor, wayward human race." I have spoken already

of the Cross. There is no agony so bitter that the Cross cannot heal its poison, no valley of humiliation so deep and so dark that the Cross cannot shine in it. But life is not all sorrow. Life is intended to be very happy. Christ must face the Cross when the time comes, because the Kingdom that He has come to found lies on the other side of His own death and is to be purchased with His blood. A young soldier can bear the pain of a wound, and is willing to die if it must be so. But the greater part of the young soldier's life is happy, whether with the satisfaction of concentrating upon the work entrusted to him, or in the careless ease of rest, or with the more acute and conscious happiness that is marked by a smile or a laugh. So the greater part of our Lord's Life was happy.

There is no more disastrous misunderstanding of it than that of Carlyle, who once went so far as to describe Christianity as "the worship of sorrow," and claimed as the true picture that of Durer, "the child without the carelessness and joys of infancy, being lean and prematurely sad, and then step after step the same heavy burdened soul appears until, with face worn and distorted, he ends his life in misery upon the Cross." The greater part of it was thoroughly happy, because He was dealing with people, whom He loved. He was happy to be among the wedding-guests at Cana of Galilee, where He even furnished some of the means of merry-making for the party. He was happy with Martha and Mary and Lazarus. He was happy among the Twelve.

It is true that the note of seriousness is never very far away. He has no praise for the idle. The Servant who buried his talent was not only slothful, but wicked.

When He took the children up in His arms, and laid His hands on them, and blessed them, He felt "indignation" with those who would have kept them away. When He reminded His hearers that the Guardian Angels of children "do always behold the face of my Father which is in Heaven," He had just before spoken of the damnation of those who "caused one of these little ones to stumble." The party in the house of Levi, the publican-disciple, was an occasion for calling "sinners to repentance" and acting as physician to "the sick." From it He bids His hearers look ahead to the days "when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days." The exhilaration felt at Peter's Confession is purged and solemnised by the first announcement of the Passion. And yet you never feel that He is "improving the occasion" by dragging in some far-fetched lesson of piety. He does not improve. He *uses* the occasion with a master-hand. That, and nothing else, is the real meaning of the occasion. He knows.

The shadow of the Passion lies over the whole life. Beneath it there is, as we have seen, some joy, a quiet readiness to face the suffering that is coming, and endless work. This is the most constant element, work. And this is where the not yet fully-taught, the not yet completely converted disciples can most promisingly set themselves in line with Him. Some of the duties of discipleship demand talents of more than one kind. Anyone can work. The servant who was praised for using his talents was perhaps a bricklayer with bricks to lay, a bus-driver with a bus to drive, an air-pilot with a plane to steer, an engineer with a plane to make. For his mere faithfulness he was admitted "into the joy

of his Lord." Thus the present herculean labours of the war-workers, cheerfully undertaken, are the fulfilling of a true vocation.

Carry this process one step further. Think of work not only as duty to be done, but as a way of serving others. Then remember that the most splendid of all the rewards promised in the Gospel, the promise of one day hearing that the Master Himself was in trouble and "you helped Me," is given to those who have been charitable to one of the least of the Master's brethren. Think of it! Not, or at least not in this instance, those who have been devout, or those who have been orthodox, but those who have been kind. The kindness is not even "in my name," like the cup of cold water of another context. It shews, as Baron von Hugel, the devout saint and learned theologian, was fond of saying, that even without any deliberate reference to God or Christ, the supernatural can be touched.

"Deliberate reference" means, of course, reference by the human agents. The value of goodness is not impaired, even when the agent is ignorant of the divine inspiration of his act, or of its ultimate reverberations in the kingdom of value. Yet it has such inspiration, and it has such reverberations. *Pereunt et imputantur* is a motto graven on clocks and sundials. "They pass and are written in the book." Some do not know—no one knows perfectly—how intricate, how searching, how all-knowing and yet all-loving is the keeping of the celestial books. The hidden slips, the unsuspected frailties are all debited, but the half-braveries, the unsuccessful struggles, even the faint desires are all credited. They are all known because they are all done for or against the Son of Man. The worse things that

we do, the better things that we do, are worse and better elements in our service of Christ. All life is, either less worthily, or more worthily, discipleship to Him. *Laborare est Orare*, well or ill.

(iii) The best kind of faith is that which has found that there is a way from earth to heaven. It has found, in fact, two things. One is the converse of the Latin maxim just quoted, *Orare est Laborare* (Prayer is Labour), and the other is that this kind of labour is "not in vain in the Lord." To pray well is difficult. It is obviously not easy to take hold of your entire life, thoughts, feelings and desires, and hold it up towards God. Yet in hours of crisis there does emerge a belief in prayer, and a practice of prayer. It then commonly takes the simplest form of all, petition: "Lord, keep him safe." There is, beyond this, a whole world of possibilities waiting to be entered, but this is a true part of the spiritual world. It is possible, even without the quiet solitary place and the kneeling posture, which assist concentration, to establish contact with the eternal. To breathe the words, "Our Father, which art in heaven" is to be translated into an invisible, intangible world:

Nature cannot hold thee,
Heaven is all too strait
For thine endless glory
And thy royal state.

Out beyond the shining
Of the furthest star
Thou art ever stretching
Infinitely far.

Yet the hearts of children
 Hold what words cannot,
 And the God of wonders
 Loves the lowly spot.

The master-conviction of prayer is that there is Someone at the other end. The intellectual reasons for believing in prayer are partly of a simple kind, based on an extension of the child's relation to the parent, and partly of the mere philosophical kind, concerned with the effect that the human will has on the universe. Psychology helps to analyse the operation of the praying mind and will, but always there is something personal in prayer. Personal at both ends. A tryst. A contact of spirit with Spirit, mind with Mind. As the old French villager said, when they asked him what he did during the long times that he was observed to spend in Church, "I tell Him all about it, and then He tells me all about it."

This carries us on far beyond mere petition. Prayer includes every sort of waiting upon God, penitent, thankful, meditative, restful, triumphant. It need not even be expressed in words. Silence before God can be as eloquent as any speech.

"O then what soul was his, when on the tops
 Of the high mountain, he beheld the sun
 Rise up, and bathe the world in light! He looked—
 Ocean and earth, the solid frame of earth
 And ocean's liquid mass, beneath him lay
 In gladness and deep joy. The clouds were touched,
 And in their silent faces did he read
 Unutterable love. Sound needed none,
 Nor any voice of joy, his spirit drank
 The spectacle—sensation, soul and form,

All melted into him: they swallowed up
 His animal being: in them did he live,
 And by them did he live: they were his life.
 In such access of mind, in such high hour
 Of visitation from the living God,
 Thought was not yet, in enjoyment it expired.
 No thanks he breathed, he proffered no request;
 Rapt in the still communion that transcends
 The imperfect offices of prayer and praise,
 His mind was a thanksgiving to the Power
 That made him; it was blessedness and love.

William Wordsworth was a practising Churchman, but he never quite found the true and complete harmony between his Christian belief and the somewhat Pantheistic tone of his Nature-Mysticism. His friend Coleridge, with all his faults, knew better. St. Francis of Assisi, that "arrant Christian," knew much better. His hymn of praise for our brothers the sun, and the wind, and the fire; for our sister the moon; and for our sister water, "who is very serviceable unto us, and humble, and precious, and clean"; and for our mother the earth, is in perfect harmony with his Evangelical piety and his Catholic sacramental worship. The mystical sense of union with Nature, which all have at times and richly-endowed souls have constantly, is not merely compatible with belief in Christ; it is part of such belief.

The warrant for this is the Logos-theology. The Logos, inadequately translated "Word" in St. John i, 1-14, is (a) the Inner Life, Thought, Reason of God; and (b) the Self-Expression of God, that whereby God creates, inspires, redeems. Through Him, says St. John, St. Paul and the author of Hebrews, the worlds were

made and are maintained from day to day. The Nicene Creed echoes the belief. By Him, says Justin, a second-century Christian Father, good heathens like Socrates were illuminated. And, so Charles Kingsley says in his hospital hymn:

*From thee all skill and science flow,
All pity, care and love,
All calm and courage, faith and hope—
O, pour them from above*

It is only, after all, an expansion of "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life "

All this is rather profound, and its intimate bearing on life is not perceived without reflection. Somebody must enquire into these things, and it is an encouragement to plain people who desire to be assured that their Master, of whom they think of as Jesus among men, is behind the rising of the sun and the roaring of the wind. But it is, after all, human life with which we are most concerned. That is where the need for prayer is most acute. Believers often wonder what non-believers do in times of agonising pressure. Surely their hearts must almost crack and their heads must almost burst with the effort of trying to understand the present and to imagine the future. If there is only human strength available, if human wisdom alone is to be called upon to see the way into the happier future, the problems are intolerably difficult. There is no justification for "escaping" into a region of irrelevant devotion. A peace-time task like first diminishing and then curing unemployment, a war-time task like carrying on both the war and the life of the nation, a post-war task like the provision of freedom and happiness for the world, need ten times the amount of thinking which has so far been

given to them. They are excruciatingly difficult. They will not be solved by any but very thoughtful people. Yet the thoughtful people must be obedient to the divine will, or their thought will fail. We need two instruments, *Orare et Laborare*.

The prayer must never be "escapist." There is no harm in escaping a little every now and then, in resorting, for example, to the cinema when there is an hour or so to spare, and gazing at the eventual circumvention of gangsters or even at the antics of Donald Duck. It helps, because it is confessedly a relaxation. But prayer must always be relevant. This does not mean that prayer must always be "about the war." Only it must never forget that "Lighten our darkness" means what it has always meant—and much more.

Prayer helps in two ways. To pray in the name of "Jesus Christ our Lord" is to approach God by the way of the Incarnate Saviour, the Crucified Saviour. All human sorrows and anxieties can be brought under the Cross. It is also to approach God by the way of the Risen and Ascended Saviour, the King of the world. This faith does not contain the promise of any specific kind of earthly victory—the one thing that we have already learned most clearly about this war is that its events are not what we had expected—but it does contain the assurance that the Kingdom is the Lord's. Christ is not dead, and Christ has not resigned. This is the thing to which we need to hold on, and this is the thing which human perversity can deny but never destroy. Prayer shoots out a unit of spiritual momentum into the universe. It united itself with the Lord's purpose and, because the Lord's method of governing the universe has room for some freedom, some co-operation,

it is allowed to make its contribution. The end towards which it contributes is a condition of human affairs inspired by two motives, the glory of God, that is, His Kingdom and His righteousness, and proper consideration for other people.

(iv) The right kind of faith uses the road between earth and heaven both ways. For the road does bear a two-way traffic. Prayer ascends, the means of grace descend. It is always surprising to me—and I speak here not merely as a priest, who is concerned with ministering the means of grace, but as a reasonably intelligent observer of events—that much more use is not made by people of Christian disposition of the Christian sacraments. Those who have been led by their early training and their own efforts to acquire experience of the sacraments know that the experience confirms and stabilises their faith. Further, it comes to them with a personal appeal, and elicits a personal response. In Christmas Communion the Child of the Manger makes His way into their affections, and renews their citizenship in the Kingdom of God. At Easter the Conqueror turns upside down the standards of the world, and establishes for them the assurance that sin can be overcome and that death is not the end. At Ascension-tide Jesus in the Sacrament lifts up His worshippers to the high level whence it is possible to see the battle and the business and the birth-pangs of a new age with a largeness and freedom which ground-observation does not give. At Whitsuntide the Spirit of Jesus, invoked upon the bread and wine, themselves the representative elements of man's food and livelihood, quickens them into a sacrament, and, spreading through the body of believers, unites them in a Spirit-born and Spirit-

nurtured fellowship. During the long season between Trinity and Advent Holy Communion consecrates the ordinary things of life.

A member of a religious community, a monk, has written discerningly of what might be done for a lad who works in a garage when he is being prepared for Confirmation:

Ought we not perhaps to be working out a different technique of preparation for Confirmation, beginning with the boy's actual interests, his home, his football club, his work, and showing him how it is just *these* that are to be laid on God's altar and redeemed? We might show him the place of his little daily job in the social structure; how the things that he uses in his daily work, petrol, oil and machinery, are God's things, used by God's children; what the Sacrament of Baptism teaches about the people who use them, that they are human beings and not wage-slaves or cogs in an economic machine, that God has a meaning for their lives: what the Sacrament of Marriage means in relation to his parents and his own future courtship and marriage, as the declaration that God has a meaning for each human family; and how in the Sacrament of the Eucharist he is to lay on God's altar all his interests and activities, and his relations to his fellows, learning thus the meaning of Intercession as the realization of the common life which he shares with them as a member of God's family, and in Holy Communion receive back from Christ all his interests and activities redeemed and transformed, as part of the interests and activities of God's universal family.¹

Those of us who are concerned in any way with the welfare of young Christendom only wish that we could do all this much more efficiently than we do.

Yet there is a possibility. It is tragic that so much is

¹ A. G. Herbert, *Liturgy and Society*, p. 194.

lost through the indifference of people, or the ignorance or laziness of priests. It is like the problem of Poverty. God does His part. The earth brings forth in abundance. Only in distribution do we fail. So with the means of grace. God's store is inexhaustible. Moreover, it uses for its earthly embodiment the simplest, commonest things of life, clean water, food and drink, the blessing of hands laid on the head, and words of pardon. I have tried to discover the extent to which my own ideas should be discounted, because I am a professional and therefore disposed to exaggerate the importance of the methods which I am pledged to follow. Doubtless the Christian future of Christendom, and of my own Church, will be very different from what I expect, or at present, with my small outlook, am able to desire. I have enough faith to hope that it will be far better than anything which I can see. Yet I am persuaded that the unformulated faith which vast numbers of English people have will not come into its own, will not reach either its just stature or its true fulfilment, until it perceives that God does break into our world, not arbitrarily or confusingly, but according to a Covenant and at the call of faith.

(v) The last mark is of a rather different kind. The right kind of faith does not exhaust itself in this present stage of human life. It looks into another world. George Canning once said that he had called in the New World to redress the balance of the Old. This is what Christian faith does. There is need of care here in the definitions. A common notion is that the after-life envisaged by Christians is a simple topsy-turvydom, in which all earthly standards will be mechanically reversed, and, roughly speaking, all the rich will be poor and all the poor will be rich. Moreover, it is assumed that the

ex-poor will occupy themselves in singing everlasting hymns. The comment that Christianity actually makes on this strange picture is that in the after-life there can be neither rich nor poor, and the only distinctions conceivable are between those who have a greater or a lesser degree of life. And, as for hymns, community-singing is in earthly life a good means of releasing and expressing spiritual energy, and a good figure of speech by which to picture its release and expression anywhere.

The real truth about heaven—into which it is not supposed by Christian faith that all persons pass instantly, at death, without any further discipline—is that it will set life free from limitations. At present I cannot do the service of God and man that I should like in my most idealistic moments to do, because my strength soon comes to an end and even my desires are faint. I may be fond of Cathedral services, or writing books, or playing the violin, or making friends with people, or many other things. But I cannot do them all the time. And in all of them I am hindered by my inefficiency and incapacity. I do not desire to die before my time because I believe that this life is the period of pilgrimage and probation which has been given to me, but I do look forward, if I should be found not unworthy, to a life in which I can be emancipated from many of the things which cripple me at present.

Is not this the way in which we ought to think of those who have laid down their lives in war? Many of them are young, untaught, inexperienced, only the raw material of good citizenship, to say nothing of Christian character. There is much that at death they had not learned. Yet they have proved their intrinsic worth by offering and giving the one thing which a man really

material and therefore divisible commodity, but a spiritual quality like faith, or leadership, or a habit of praying. That quality cannot be shared with another at a moment's notice.

Yet it is never too late to begin. Whenever you find that you have failed in some duty, it is very likely because you have not taken care to keep the thing in the front of your mind. A husband forgets his wife's birthday or the anniversary of the wedding-day. Why? Because he has allowed himself to become forgetful of his wife. If he had been thinking about her as he should do, he would have remembered the day. The remedy against casual forgetfulness is accordingly the cultivation of a habit of constant recollection of the things that are integral to life. This will only be strong if it has been fed continually during many years, but it is never too late to repent and begin again. It is, in fact, certain that in the hour of common danger not only the manhood but the love of a careless husband would revive.

I suggested that the oil, which the foolish Virgins suddenly wanted and could not obtain, might be supposed to stand, among other things, for a habit of praying. What will be the equipment against fear of a person who has this habit? In order to estimate this, it must be remembered that prayer does not mean only petition. Many of the best praying-times begin with an attempt to rest in security on the love of God. You call to mind some picture of the Saviour, teaching, welcoming children, healing, crucified, risen, ascending. You remind yourself of your Baptism ("Called to be saints"), your Confirmation ("Greater is he that is in you than he that is in the world"), times when you have been divinely guided, grounds for serenity and confidence.

idea. 'Well, then,' I exclaimed, 'I will be a hero and, confiding in Providence, I will brave every danger.'" He spoke afterwards of the "radiant orb" which from that hour hung before him and "urged him onward to renown."

All normal human beings have fear. But they can have something else as well. The important thing is that the reaction from fear shall be not cowardice, but courage. And courage can come from nothing but some kind of faith.

There is of course, when danger is about, a natural hope to escape. This is in part due to two ineradicable instincts, (*a*) to go on living, and (*b*) to prevail over the enemy or obstacle, and in part to a more considered wish to contribute further service. For these ends it is reasonable and right to make plans for safety, but it would be wrong to let such plans fill the horizon and obsess the life. The important thing is not that I should be preserved, but that I should be my best self and do whatever it is my duty to do.

How can I be ready for this? Last moment preparations are not very much good. It depends much more on what you have been all your life than on what you would like to begin to be now. The Parable of the Ten Virgins (St. Matthew xxv, 1-13) sounds at first rather hard: "Give us of your oil; for our lamps are going out. But the wise answered, saying, Peradventure there will not be enough for us and you: go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves." The wise Virgins sound rather selfish, not to say grumpy. But apart from the fact that "wisdom" is never presented in the Gospels as the sole virtue, even the apparent hardness vanishes when it is remembered that the oil represents not some

material and therefore divisible commodity, but a spiritual quality like faith, or leadership, or a habit of praying. That quality cannot be shared with another at a moment's notice.

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Then let your assurance take a wider sweep. Think of Church and Nation, at home and overseas, a vast army of men and women, some more Christian, some less, but decent, kindly people, serving God and man. God has built up all that great fabric, and has guided the development of the national character that lies behind it. It is likely enough in the abstract, and it now looks very likely in fact, that God means it to be purified by the fire of adversity, but God does not build up a great people with a clear vocation and a considerable place in the world, and then let it go to waste. "Thy God hath sent forth strength for thee: stablish the thing, O God, that thou hast wrought in us."

These reflections will surely grow into something like gratitude, even adoration. Resting in the Lord becomes rejoicing in the Lord, a form of devotion for which the Psalms give abundant material, above all perhaps Psalm cxlv. It is then, at the moment of exhilaration, that we can turn to Request. This, of course, has a condition. The human "Please" is a short form of "May it please you," and from that the condition "If it please you" is never very far away. It is *always* a condition of prayer. And remember that "Thy will be done" is not only a meek acceptance of something disagreeable. It means your own feebleness being lifted on the strong wings of the divine purpose: "More than we can ask or think, more than we desire or deserve." Have no scruples about praying for victory. If we could not pray for victory we should have no right to be at war at all. But when the word "victory," even with the *always necessary condition, occurs in prayer, let it not* mean "smashing the Germans." It is indeed idle to live in a fool's paradise. There are in war dreadful necessities

which must be faced, and faced by all, not only by those who launch or make bombs or shells. The conscience of a non-combatant must carry its share, which is, I think, greater than that of a combatant because to the combatant it is definitely a matter of obeying orders, and also because the combatant has less time to think. But let us keep that language out of our prayers. Let us in that region think rather of the sterilising of an evil spirit which has invaded the hearts of men who had, and still have, the capacity to be our neighbours.

This will have seemed something of a digression. The relevance of it is this. A spirit thus fortified beforehand should not have great difficulty in calling up the necessary reinforcement in an hour of danger by means of ejaculatory or unuttered prayer. It is often thought that part of our Lord's intention in repeating on the Cross the opening words of Psalm xxii: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" was to remind Himself of the whole Psalm, which does pass at verse 21 into a happy triumphant tone. It has been said elsewhere in these pages that the tragic words actually quoted must be allowed to have their full meaning, but even so it is not improper to remember their whole context, and to suppose that this was remembered by the Crucified. At all events, experience which has been genuinely gained before can be used when it is needed. The father who said, "Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief," may have had only an elementary form of confidence in the famous Healer, but a spirit nurtured on the Bible, on the Psalms, the *Te Deum*, the Prayer of Consecration, and the *Gloria in Excelsis* will reap a far deeper, richer comfort even from such simple words as those.

Another way of preparing yourself beforehand against cowardice is to form the habit of serving others. This will make for selflessness and so for courage. Hospital nurses are in themselves as liable to be frightened as anybody else. Yet in danger they are cool, collected and public-spirited. Why? Because their calling is to care for those who are in need of care. The Army Chaplains in the heroic Dunkirk episode had the ordinary human timidity and self-concern. Yet they triumphed over it, because their calling is at all times to give a lead in spiritual things. The officer in battle has an additional incentive to courage in the fact that he is in command of men. You, who read this, have perhaps never faced imminent physical peril and do not know how you would bear yourself if it came. Yet it is certain that, if you are a parent, you would put the needs of your children before your own, and if you have been accustomed to have the large and generous outlook of a true regard for others, you would have it then. It is surely very significant that the Apostle Peter, after a conspicuous failure in courage, was not only restored to his apostleship, but was given a further commission, to feed and tend the sheep and lambs of the flock. It was a risk, but only the small risk involved in the attempt to pierce a timid exterior and reach the loving, pastoral heart which was below. It will be observed that most of my examples are from those in responsible and technically superior positions, but this is not in the least necessary. All that is needed is a sense of duty to others. Two of the bravest characters in fiction, though both were subordinates, and *neither of them ever went in danger of his life*, are Mark Tapley and Tom Pinch.

In the actual hour of danger, what can be done? A

well-stored mind is a great resource. Anything that has ever been found to be an antidote to loneliness is also an antidote to fear. Macaulay was once crossing to Dublin by night. He did not sleep, but walked the deck. It was too dark for him to follow his favourite occupation of reading, so he repeated to himself the first two books of *Paradise Lost*, nearly all of which he was pleased to find that he could remember. Few have anything like his memory, and it is not seriously suggested that the repetition of the words of *Paradise Lost* is the best spiritual remedy for fear. Yet it is remarkable what remembered words can do. As a little boy I was once frightened at night. Oddly enough, I found comfort in repeating some dimly-understood words which somehow floated into my mind: "Where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest." They come, as I have since discovered, from a very pessimistic chapter of Job (iii, 17), but they produced at the time in the child-mind a vaguely religious sense of consolation. There are better words than those, words like, "Be of good cheer; for I have overcome the world." A memory stored with such is well fortified. It has, not an iron ration, but a golden ration, against the hour of need.

There is one fear that can never be entertained by the sons and daughters of Christian faith. It is the fear that evil will prevail over good, that sinners will be too strong for God. So far as real values are concerned, evil never prevails at all, even in the immediate result. Traitors and assassins are always contemptible and worthless. Edith Cavell remains a heroic woman, even though she is shot, and would be a heroic woman even if she had been hanged.

This confidence must be kept quite separate from considerations of personal safety or advantage. There is no kind of warrant that Citizen X will not be ruined, or that he and his family will not be killed. Citizen X must face that possibility, and must prepare himself to think of whatever he may be called upon to give as a contribution. It is, as a matter of fact, probable that in the years of universal penury that will follow the war the British Government will provide that there shall be bread and butter for everybody, that the sick shall have beef-tea as well, and that a good education shall be available for those who are competent to profit by it. There will, in any case, be no luxuries for anyone. The day of the wealthy is over, and after a generation or two, when the old conditions might have had time to return, it may be hoped that no one will want them to. In this way the lust of mere acquisition will be discouraged. Meantime, there is something to reassure the small man who has hitherto so desperately wanted to become a small capitalist, to insure his life, to put something by. He has wanted some measure of security in behalf of others. And he can hardly be blamed for his anxiety. On the whole he may take heart. The prospect of at least bread and butter in old age which the Government have for years held out to the wage-earner will be extended to the black-coated population.

Nevertheless, there is no security that a factory, a business, a professional practice will not crash, or that anything like prosperity will remain. That must be faced. There can be no promise that even life will be spared. That also must be faced. There are only two ways of facing it, the way of Stoicism and the way of Christianity. Stoicism is all very well, if you happen

to have the temperament. But the pure Stoic is a rare bird, and for the rest of us grit is a bleak diet. In any case, the temperament, even if you happen to have it, is imperfect. The reply of the Stoic to adversity is *Rex Sapiens*, which means that the philosopher is so self-sufficing that even the royal purple would be an undesired and boring addition to his wardrobe. In extreme cases in ancient Rome his final reply was suicide, which seemed to him a dignified protest, but was, in fact, as it always is, an evasion. The truth is that the Stoic had no real answer to make. To say, "I happen to be so strong-minded that I can bear this, or anything, and, if it should become intolerable even for me, I should shew my contempt for circumstances by ceasing to take any interest in life at all," is not the attitude of a good citizen of the world. Silence is not a real answer. The wisdom or strong-mindedness is too incommunicable, too "capitalistic," and the despair is unworthy of human nature.

The Christian's attitude is quite different. He has no contempt for circumstances. He believes that circumstances are always intended to be redeemed rather than despised or even neglected, and that there are no circumstances in which it is right to despair. The Christian has a mastery over circumstances which the Stoic has not. The Stoic can meet them unmoved. The Christian uses them.

A good example of this is the attitude to danger. There is a great difference between "Carry on" and "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." The advantage in humanity is all in favour of the Christian alternative. There is no objection to incorporating something of the Stoic nonchalance into

the complete disposition. There is no harm in saying, "I will shew them that they cannot frighten me." It is a great asset to possess Bulldog Drummond's "ice-cold brain at moments of danger." We may all wish that we were like that, but a higher level was reached by the first Christian martyr, Stephen. And that, not because his face was "as it had been the face of an angel"—that might or might not be an accompaniment of martyrdom—but because "he cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge." One of many who is worthy to be set side by side with him is Thomas Bilney, "Little Bilney of Cambridge," who was burned in 1541. It is related by Foxe that there came to his burning "certain friars, doctors and priors of their houses, who said, 'O Master Bilney, the people be persuaded that we be the causes of your death, and that we have procured the same; and thereupon it is like that they will withdraw their charitable alms from us, except you declare your charity towards us, and discharge us of the matter.' Whereupon the said Thomas Bilney spake with a loud voice to the people, and said, 'I pray you good people, be never the worse to these men for my sake, as though they should be the authors of my death; it was not they.' And so he ended."

Stephen of Jerusalem and Thomas Bilney knew what to expect. Their fate had become certain. Our case is very different. There is a very high probability that any given person will escape physical injury, though there is always the chance of the direct hit or the flying fragment, and invasion would involve civilian deaths. Nevertheless, the right line of conduct is the same for all: "I am in the hands of God. My life may be taken now, or it may continue to be lent to me for a further

term of service. Meantime, my body is a temple of the Holy Ghost. I must therefore, as St. Paul says, glorify God in my body. I do not belong wholly to myself. I belong to God, and also to society. Of the three 'absolute and luminously self-evident beings' (three and not two, as Newman thought), self is incomparably, and indeed, as against God, infinitely, the least important. If I am killed, it will mean that I have been used to the full, chosen to make all at once the maximum offering, and my family will share that glory."

Difficult to believe? Yes, but that is because we all have so slight a hold upon, so dim a faith in, things that are unseen. Yet it is true. One of the great victories over self is to learn to understand how a thing can be true even though you cannot achieve a personal belief in it. Job never said, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust him." It is a serious mistranslation. What Job really said was almost the opposite. Yet if he had said what the English version puts into his mouth, it would have exactly illustrated my point. St. Paul does say it, in an extreme form. St. Paul declares that, when God has clearly promised, anyone who may assert that God has not kept His plighted word is lying." Let God be true, and every man a liar." Even though no one in the world knew it, even though everyone in the world denied it, the truth of God would still stand fast.

What should a Christian believe about death? Listen again to St. Paul, calmly weighing, in his letter to the Philippians, the advantages of death and life. His preference is unmistakably for death, but then—there is his work. Here is a famous scholar's paraphrase of Philippians i, 21-25:

Others may make choice between life and death. I gladly accept either alternative. If I live, my life is one with Christ; if I die, my death is gain to me. Yet when I incline to prefer death, I hesitate: for may not my life—this present existence which men call life—may not my life be fruitful through my labours? Nay, I know not how to choose. I am hemmed in, as it were, a wall on this side and a wall on that. If I consulted my own longing, I should desire to dissolve this earthly tabernacle, and to go home to Christ; for this is very far better. If I consulted your interests, I should wish to live and labour still: for this your needs require. And a voice within assures me, that so it will be. I shall continue here and abide with you all; that I may promote your advance in the faith and your joy in believing.

We cannot all rise to this height. We need not. "By their fruits ye shall know them." The one essential condition is to be willing, and then to act, if the call comes.

Willing for what? Willing to be changed, if that should be required, to another region of life. It is a great change. There could hardly fail to be in it, and therefore in the anticipation of it, some shock. Many swimmers, who can dive reasonably well, can never divest themselves of a certain initial reluctance to plunge in. Death is much more than diving. To enter upon a wholly new and wholly unknown field of experience is a gigantic adventure. Moreover, it is never to be deliberately courted. The entire history of human life on earth proves that death is a thing which is not, and should not be, "enterprised, nor taken in hand, unadvisedly, lightly or wantonly." Suicide has always been accounted by the Christian judgement to be self-murder, and a sin. Yet death, when it comes, is an honest human adventure, and fear ought to be swallowed up in faith.

FAITH OR FEAR?

If life be long, I will be glad
That I may long obey;
If short, yet why should I be sad
To end my little day?

Christ leads me through no darker rooms
Than He went through before;
He that into God's kingdom comes
Must enter by this door.

This is good, but to it must be added that the confidence of the Christian does not arise only out of the past. It is a confidence that in this very darkness through which the human life is passing there is a Divine Presence even now, and that when the fifth wall of the dark room melts into non-resistance and what has hitherto been earthly and mortal is welcomed into another stage of being, that Presence will still be close at hand. Lord Grey of Fallodon loved Harvest Festivals in his Northumbrian village church. Once he found himself joining in the hymn which contains the verse:

To guard us on our way,
And guide us when perplexed,
And free us from all ills
In this world and the next.

It is indeed an audacious quatrain, and Lord Grey says that he "wriggled with delight." He tasted, and enjoyed, its extravagance. But is it really extravagant? "Free us from all ills in this world" is an ambiguous phrase. Much will depend on the meaning assigned to the word "free." In death, on the other hand, the ordinary qualifications, arising out of human incapacity and the hardness of circumstances, do not hold. The spirit is then delivered from earthly limitations, capable

of being completely emancipated. Why, then, should we fear?

One more question about this remains to be considered. Is the Christian simply buoyed up by the hope of heavenly reward? And if he is, must not his conduct be condemned as a form of self-interest? This is a very common reproach, for which, in the language sometimes used and in the thoughts and feelings sometimes entertained by religious persons, there is a good deal of justification. There is a wise discussion of it in a book to which readers are referred for guidance not only on this topic, but on many others, Dr. K. E. Kirk's *The Vision of God*. Dr. Kirk's method is first of all to consider the numerous passages in the Gospels which speak of a reward to be expected, and then the equally numerous passages which expressly forbid any expectation of reward. He then points the way towards a solution by observing (a) that the hope of future blessedness is never to be the *motive* of the action (it is "for my sake and the gospel's" that everything is to be sacrificed), and (b) that there is no sort of apportionment by merit. The Prodigal Son and the workers who began at the eleventh hour receive rewards wholly incommensurate with their deservings. In fact, there are no human deservings. "We are all unprofitable servants." His final conclusion is that our Lord:

gave the thought of reward a baffling prominence in His teaching that men should learn not to be afraid of it. They were not to make reward their goal; but neither were they to be so shocked at the idea, if and when it presented itself, as to immerse themselves in studied attempts at self-forgetfulness. Leaving behind thoughts both of reward and of disinterestedness as equally self-centred, they were to look

forward to that true self-forgetfulness which cannot be acquired by human effort, but comes only to those whose hearts are set on God.

We are not to make an idol of self. Everyone knows that. Nor are we to make an idol of not-self. Only the Christians know that. But if they can live more nearly as they know, the truth will spread. The true end of man is the glory of God.

Finally, we return to the vital point which has been touched before. There is one kind of fear that must never be harboured. That is the fear that evil can prevail, that men of ill-will can prove stronger than God. I do not here refer to the prospects of victory in the war. I have no competence to utter predictions about that beyond what anyone could make. My own peace of mind is derived immediately from such knowledge as I have of the numbers, skill, and temper of the British armed forces, and the complete absence of panic among the civilian population. But my peace of mind is ultimately derived from a deeper cause, consideration of which vastly enlarges the area of confidence. It is derived ultimately from faith in God, and a conviction that the vocation and true happiness of man is to live and act in harmony with God, and therefore that the cause of God will not be defeated in the world. I may not live to see or share the victory, but it is sure.

It is perfectly true, as the *Christian News-Letter* said on June 26th, 1940, that the troubles of humanity are due to a world-sickness, of which the recent policy and conduct of the German nation are one symptom. The thing on which the writer lays his finger is the reckless exploitation of Nature in order to get rich or powerful, of which we have all been guilty. Behind that he discerns

a failure in reverence, a failure to believe that God, as well as being transcendent, is in Nature. The encouragement which he offers to Britons is that the German failure has been mainly ethical, and our failure has been mainly economic. The regions always overlap, but in so far as they can be separated, the ethical is the more vital of the two. Still, there is plenty of ground for self-questioning and humiliation. The chief ground for hope is the very fact that the British people, without abating one jot of their resolution to finish the duty which is in hand, are spiritually at this moment more humble and more willing to be led into truer ways of life than they have been for generations. We are conscious of our economic, cultural, and social sins. Mr. Amery's broadcast speech on June 15th, 1940, the anniversary of the signing of Magna Carta, was a fine statement of ideals. He spoke of a "freedom which comes from the enforcement of the law on all without regard to privilege or power," and is meaningless "except as a right adjustment between all the forces and elements in the national life." He then applied the principle to India, and said:

It is our genuine wish to help to bridge over existing differences, and to enable Indians as soon as possible to play the vital part which they are entitled to play in devising the *permanent framework of India's future constitution*.

The task before the leaders of India, as before ourselves, is one of the noblest, if also one of the most difficult, which statesmanship has ever essayed. It will need all the spirit of Magna Carta, its practical sense as well as its generosity, to make that task possible of achievement.

India is far from being the only problem. Oppression may mean depriving Poles or Norwegians of political freedom. It may mean withholding employment from

British workers, it may mean condemning ten or villagers to occupy bad houses, it may give to millions of both juvenile and adult the education which will cause them to use their leisure in a stupid and vulgar way. In such devotion as is demanded by Mr. Amery, if we can compass it, to freedom and justice, and in determination to abolish every kind of slavery and injustice, fear is annihilated. We cannot believe that oppression, whether as exercised by any other people or among ourselves, will finally prevail. Good is stronger than evil, and will outfight it, and outlast it, and outlive it. There has been a change in the social conscience of Britain since the day when Disraeli spoke of "the Two Nations," and there has been a great change in quite recent months, since September 1939 and May 1940. We are still very far indeed from being a band of brothers, but our unbrotherliness is on our consciences in a new way. And that is not due merely to a wish to be united in war-time, it is not even due merely to a good-natured wish that the distribution of comfort and security shall be more equitable. There is a mystical quality in it. It is a feeling after God. And any degree of feeling after God has something in it of that perfect love which casteth out fear. What St. Paul says about earthly rulers is true of relations with the Creator and Ruler of the universe. "If thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain." "Wilt thou then not be afraid? Do that which is good."

CHAPTER NINE

THE VISION OF FAITH

THIS chapter was begun on June 18th, the anniversary of Waterloo, when no one of the British public knew what would be the outcome of events in France. The first impression produced by the news of the prospect of the elimination of all, or most of, the resources of France from the conflict was something like this: There was profound compassion for the sorrows of France, and some apprehension of increased danger, but the dominating thought was a renewed conviction that there must be some divine vocation for our people to fulfil. So far as military resistance to a would-be monarch of Europe is concerned, we have borne the brunt of it more than once. The Spanish Armada might or might not be considered a parallel case, but there was Louis XIV, and there was Napoleon, and there was Kaiser Wilhelm II. The last time we stood with others to the end, but on the two occasions before that the help of our allies was not always very profitable, and was in any case not permanent. Pitt's famous words, spoken in November 1805, shortly after the Battle of Trafalgar, that England had saved herself by her exertions and would yet save Europe by her example, may sound rather boastful, but they were substantially true. It may be remembered that they were almost immediately followed by Napoleon's crushing victory over the Russians and Austrians at Austerlitz.

This much of political musing was impossible to

exclude from the mind of an Englishman with a little knowledge of history and a strong belief in the vocation—the vocation, not the destiny—of the British peoples. Nevertheless, this book is not concerned with political predictions, a field in which the author has no competence. The vision of faith is concerned with that which transcends, while it includes, political considerations.

What material have we for a general forward-looking view? The vision of the Bible is both apocalyptic and evolutionary. That is to say, it sometimes expects a violent, catastrophic Act of God, which will change the face of the world and bring in the New Age. And sometimes it expects a gradual development. In our Lord's own expectation, the apocalyptic element seems to have the larger place, though it must be remembered that He was reported by men who had been trained in an apocalyptic school, and may have added some of the apocalyptic terminology to the account of what He said. Matthew Arnold, who was familiar with the critical New Testament scholarship of his time, and had, moreover, a singular power of touching the heart of a religious problem which met him in a literary form, went so far as to quote a non-apocalyptic passage: "The kingdom of God is within you"; and to add: "Such an account of the kingdom of God has more right, even if recorded only once, to pass with us for Jesus Christ's own account than the common materializing accounts, if repeated twenty times; for it was manifestly quite foreign to the disciples' own notions, and they never could have invented it." Arnold, however, lived before the era of Johannes Weiss, Schweitzer, and Burkitt. They produced a reasoned,

documented case for believing in the predominantly apocalyptic nature of primitive Christianity and of our Lord's own outlook and teaching. The emphasis of those scholars has in the present generation been to some extent modified by further research. The prevailing interpretation now is one of something like what von Dobschutz called Transmuted Eschatology. By this queer term he meant that the ideas used by our Lord were largely of an apocalyptic kind, but that the application of them was carried by Him from the future into the present. He applied the traditional "futurist" terms to the situation which He Himself had already brought about. In this way was explained the otherwise puzzling fact that the Kingdom of Heaven is spoken of in the Gospels now as a present and now as a future thing, now as suddenly arriving, and now as gradually developing. So quite recently Professor C. H. Dodd of Cambridge has said that the primitive Good News was something like this:

"The prophecies are fulfilled, and the New Age is inaugurated
by the coming of Christ.

He was born of the seed of David.

He died according to the Scriptures, to deliver us out of the
present evil age,

He was buried.

He rose on the third day according to the Scriptures.

He is exalted at the right hand of God, as Son of God and
Lord of quick and dead.

He will come again as Judge and Saviour of men."

It would seem, therefore, that inasmuch as we have had, during the centuries that have elapsed since primitive Christianity, a long course of Christian evolution, with from time to time a violent crisis, e.g.

at the Fall of Rome, at the Reformation, at the French Revolution, from 1914 to 1918, and during a term of years beginning with 1939, we are entitled to conclude that God uses and will continually use the evolutionary method, and also no less entitled to pick out apocalyptic elements from the Gospel and to expect that they will again emerge. The essential thing is to look for the controlling or correcting hand of Christ, and to be prepared to find it using almost any form of operation.

After all, when you look carefully at the contents of the Gospels, it is surprising to see how little difference the apocalyptic form, where it is found, seems to make to the total results. It was pointed out by a shrewd critic¹ that, where the apocalyptic motive happens to be quite definitely expressed, the teaching itself is ordinary, as in "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." Where the teaching is unusual and striking, as in "Resist not evil," and some special and characteristic motive might be looked for, there is no hint of apocalyptic. For example, when the disciples are bidden not to take two coats, it is not because the end of the world is coming, and there is not going to be another winter. "Love God," "Love your neighbour," or "Go, and do thou likewise" at the end of the parable of the Good Samaritan, are timeless, and give no indication whatever of any expectation of a coming catastrophe.² The parables of the Ten Virgins and the Talents, with the sudden return of the dispenser of salvation, are

¹ The late Cyril W. Emmet

² The only two actual cases in the New Testament in which the teaching seems to be at all affected by apocalyptic expectations, and to partake of the nature which has been called Interim-ethics, are 1 Corinthians vii, 26 and 29. There the teaching is different from what it would have been in calmer times.

balanced by the Sower, the Leaven, and the Seed growing secretly, with their suggestion of a long period of evolution. The future dating of such words as, "When the Son of Man cometh, shall he find faith on the earth?" is to be set side by side with, "If I with the finger of God cast out demons, no doubt the Kingdom of God is come upon you."

This little excursion into New Testament interpretation has been necessary in order to adjust our observing instruments, and see what hopes may be entertained by Christian people of being able to recognise and understand phenomena to-day, and to foresee truly the events of the future. In this attempt there are four points which it seems essential to consider.

I

Christian faith involves believing that the Body of Christ is in the world to-day, entrusted with, and actually performing, the work of Christ. That work is the work of gathering disciples, teaching, forgiving, feeding them, and equipping them for their Christian warfare in the world. "Come unto me," "Let these words sink into your ears," "Thy sins be forgiven thee," "This do, in remembrance of Him," and "Receive the Holy Ghost" are all words which have their genesis in the Gospels and are habitually used by the Church.

Such use is only possible if there is an essential continuity between the Church as it has been and the Church as it is, and also between the Church as it is and the Church as it shall be. An essential continuity, a continuity in essence. There is no guarantee that the existing personnel will continue in any place of privilege

or credit. There are severe words in the Gospels about the Jewish Church: "Verily I say unto you, that the publicans and the harlots go into the kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of righteousness; and ye believed him not, but the publicans and the harlots believed him" (St. Matthew xxi, 31-32). Another passage speaks of many coming from the east and west and north and south to sit down in the kingdom of God, "and yourselves cast out." These words cannot be applied quite simply to the Christian Church, because the Coming of Christ into the world marks, at the very least, a great difference between the provisional Jewish Church and the New Israel, the Body of Christ. Nevertheless, St. Paul and others are fully entitled to translate them into the appropriate form. St. Paul lost no time in applying the spirit of such warnings to the personnel of the Church in his day. A simple instance is, "*Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall.*" A more exact and detailed warning occurs in Romans xi, 21. The situation was that the Jewish Church had failed, and had been for the most part rejected. To the Gentiles who had been installed in their room St. Paul says:

Be not high minded, but fear: for if God spared not the natural branches, neither will he spare thee. Behold then the goodness and severity of God: toward them that fell, severity; but toward thee, God's goodness, if thou continue in his goodness. Otherwise thou also shalt be cut off.

These warnings, in so far as they have force to-day, are to the unworthy members of the Church, some of whom know their unworthiness full well, and some do not. But worthy or unworthy, there is, in any case, the certainty that the Church will suffer. It will be despised

and laughed at, and at times and in places it will be persecuted. "If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you." Much of the work that it does will be anonymous, and even while they are profiting by it, people will go on saying, "Why does not the Church do something?" This constantly happens. I recall a well-known citizen of a certain town, an excellent man, who on two occasions said in my hearing, "I have sometimes thought that this is just the sort of thing that the Churches might take up." It will hardly be believed that the first time he was in my study, and I had just been asking him to support a Church Society which existed for the purpose, and that the second time he was standing on the platform of an inter-denominational Society which had been formed to promote the very object to which he was referring. Truly, it is a good thing for the world that "the Churches" do not confine themselves to doing that for which they get the credit.

A distinguished layman, the Headmaster of Rugby, has lately commented on the curious habit of random criticism:

It is disturbing to realise how far worship is for many young people coming to be regarded as a matter of taste. *When this point of view is challenged and they are confronted with the universal practice of the early Church, they almost always put the blame on the clergy.* This widespread rush to criticise "the Church" ignores not only the fact that the Church is ourselves, but the complete apathy of the ordinary man when "the Church" does make an attempt to capture his interest or secure his co-operation. Sub-editors cut out all references to God or Christianity in the speeches of public men.

The criticism is often very unfair, and yet the vocation

of the Church of Christ is so high that much of the criticism, however unfair on the part of the critics, however mistaken in point of fact, is probably in essential value, that is to say, in the mind of God quite just. There are, of course, certain people whose condemnation is essential as a testimonial. The Church must and should seem foolish to the worldly and a nuisance to the wicked. Yet the Church, like other institutions, has an immense amount of organisation, furniture, and custom which is purely human. Some of this is thoroughly satisfactory. Some of it began in bad periods and has never been desirable. Some of it began in good periods and served a purpose at the time, but is now obsolete. Some is well enough, but could be improved. There is nothing in the present system of staffing parishes and cathedrals, the present arrangements for the training, paying, and housing of the clergy, the present slight use made of lay ministration, male and female, which is sacrosanct. So far as the Church of England is concerned, it has no authority to produce another Bible, another Creed, another Ministry, and other Sacraments, but those are the only four things which are "given." All else, including the Book of Common Prayer, can be changed if necessary.

Here, then, is plenty of room for reform, even revolution. But there is more. Even in secular things organisation will not succeed unless there is some spirit in it. Far more is this true of the Church. There have been not only, as the history books record, in the last two hundred years, but in quite recent times, some notable spiritual advances. A rather hostile, cynical journal remarked a year or two ago that the Church of England seemed to be "getting religion in its old age."

Yet there are some half-converted clergy, others who are ineffective by reason of some disabilities which have not been overcome. There are conventional congregations, ignorant and custom-ridden churchgoers, and their outlook is often disastrously parochial. Clergy and laity together are only at the beginning of the urgent task of developing the new technique which is needed for the new times. The acts of personal and private sacrifice which are performed by Christian people are innumerable, but there is not much corporate sacrifice. Perhaps, if there were such it would be over-spectacular, ostentatious, and so not a true sacrifice, but it is worth remembering that this is what the world looks for from Christian people.¹

The conclusion of the whole matter is that the Church is always lamentably untrue to its ideal and is always eager to be reinforced, and willing even to be superseded by those who could do better. Christianity is pledged to the belief that Christ will abide, and that the Church, the Body of Christ, will abide, and also to the hope that the present embodiment of the Church will turn, whether gradually or suddenly, by means of development, reinforcement, and the disappearance of passengers or hinderers, into something very much better.

II

The second thing that the vision of faith sees is that large masses of existing spiritual forces, which are at

¹ It is also worth remembering that if almost all the clergy performed what would be popularly considered a great act of sacrifice by quitting their present houses and living in much smaller ones, the only people who would be more thankful than the clergy themselves would be their wives. It would be no sacrifice. It would be for very many a blessed end to constant heart-breaking anxiety.

present unattached, uninstructed, uninspired, and unhelpful, will be mobilised. Nothing is more certain than that there are vast reserves of partly Christian character in our population. The patience, the kindness, the unselfishness of millions of average men and women are most remarkable. And these are not the pagan, but the Christian virtues. It may well be that we have been living on our capital, and that without reinforcement we should be bankrupt soon, but it is happily true that reinforcements are not unprocurable. It is certain that the great majority of the population are darkly ignorant of what Christianity has to say, and are taking almost no steps whatever to find out or to avail themselves of what its organisation offers, but they have somehow breathed in through the air not only a strong appreciation of the Christian character in others, but a certain degree of possession of it for themselves. The men who *returned from Dunkirk had endured terrible hardships*, they had been exposed to terrible dangers, they had been robbed of the chance to shew what they could do, but they did not say, "We are fed up with the whole business." They said, "Thank God for saving our lives. We are still ready to do whatever duty is laid upon us." Long hours are worked in factories without complaint. The women, the same women who in the back streets of industrial towns or in country cottages have always been ready to sit up all night with a sick neighbour, are ready now to face separation from their children, anxiety on behalf of their men, and death from the air, and they can still be patient and even cheerful.

The question is: Can this be mobilised? I do not say drilled and regimented: that is not our way. But can it be made self-conscious, intelligent, consistent, aware of

its own inspiration, eager to be used for the glory of God?

It will need an immense amount of education. This is not the place to discuss technicalities, important as they are, such as the maintenance or abolition of the dual system in the Elementary Schools (Provided and non-Provided), the time assigned to religious teaching in the Secondary Schools, the denominational complexion and the expensiveness of the Public Schools and the old Universities. It will save time to make the sweeping prediction that in the future, after a better elementary education than most of them receive now, all adolescents who seem likely to profit by it will receive higher education at school and at either academic or technical colleges, that their parents will pay for it as far as they are able, and that for the rest it will be free. May it be added that the experience of the war will have made those who control education determined that the ruling aim at every stage of this shall be to develop the Christian character? I do not know. I only know that this is what ought to be done.

This kind of planning will demand support in two quarters, apart from the pocket of the taxpayer. The parents will have to take hold of their responsibilities. I assume that in the vast and revolutionary changes that will come to pass there will still be parents. The family, far more than the nation, and infinitely more than the social class, is the God-given unit. Not only will it survive, but it is the pattern on which society needs to be built. At present the parent is shirking his responsibilities. He is thoughtful and provident on the negative side. He says, "I wonder if I ought to bring children into the world, with things as they are?" On the positive side, he hopes that his children will be happy and good,

but at present he is being very cowardly about putting any view of life before them. I referred in a former chapter to Galsworthy's *Saga*. Young Jolyon says, in the context quoted, to his father: "Do you believe in God, Dad; I've never known." I've never known! The father in the book is very sympathetically described. No reader can help liking him. And it turns out that he does, in his queer way, believe in God. But his son has never known. What an indictment of modern English fathers! They have not given their sons any hint of the conclusions which their experience of life had led them to form about God. There is cowardice here. But perhaps, it may be said, many of them have not formed any conclusions. In that case, for "cowardice" read "sloth".

The other support must come from the adolescents themselves. They are willing to be taught while they are at school. They learn a good deal of public spirit, House feeling, School feeling, League of Nations feeling, whatever is put in their way. Their generous instincts are aroused, and they respond. But it has not gone deep enough to take root and spring up of itself. The religion, the public spirit, the interest in knowledge, which they had at school, are apt to fade away. The lean years after school are apt to swallow up the good years spent in school. "Give them something to live for," and "Bring them up alive" are no bad slogans.

Shall we attempt, in the Nazi manner, to harness them to the chariot of competitive, arrogant, and destructive Nationalism? Perish the thought! Let them, at all costs, be assisted to grow into servants of the real God, not of an idol. And let us never attempt to bind them into one mould, a "Winston Churchill" or an "Ernest Bevin" Youth Movement of a uniform kind.

The Board of Education has lately undertaken a direct responsibility for "Youth Welfare" outside the schools, and at the same time has promised to welcome and use local and sectional experiments. There is accordingly every inducement for enterprise by municipalities and business firms, and above all by churches. There is not the smallest reason why we should not take hints from the less sinister side of experiments elsewhere. I live in the hope of seeing from time to time a thousand of my young fellow-citizens marching with banners, in sports dress, with a red cross woven on their white jerseys, to practise and demonstrate their physical prowess in some open space, and, as they pass Exeter Cathedral, with the interior and the spiritual purpose of which they are thoroughly familiar, coming to the salute. Let us learn to be a little more spectacular. Why not?

This means that the splendid material which God has planted in our sons and daughters, which unwise methods, negligent parents, an unreflecting public, and elements of folly in the young people themselves have largely neutralised, will have something like its proper scope. Will it become Christian? All that I can reply is that Christ said to Simon Peter, "Launch out into the deep, and let down your nets for a draught." What is the implication? It is: Trust God utterly, make large plans in the departmental matters with which you are at present concerned, and expect results." The result of launching out on the shore of the Lake of Galilee was success, a conspicuous success in the matter in hand. The effect of this success on Simon Peter, who represents in our parable the parents, the public, and the educational authorities, was to purge his soul. What he said was not merely *Non nobis, Domine*. It was *Peccator sum*,

Domine. That is how souls are purged. And the Dominical rejoinder was, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt catch men." The future of our educational system depends on the degree of faithfulness with which the story told in St. Luke v, 1-11 can be reflected on the large scale.

III

Can the Church of Christ do the work of shepherding, guiding, and intensifying the good desires which I am diagnosing in the population? If by the Church of Christ is meant only those who are at present clearly recognisable as active Church members, with the existing ministers of religion, and their present organisation, clearly not. But suppose that by the Church of Christ we understand "Christian forces." And suppose that behind Christian forces we see—Christ. "Alas, my master, said the prophet's servant, How shall we do? Fear not, said the prophet, for they that be with us are more than they that be with them. And the prophet prayed, and said, O Lord, open his eyes, that he may see. And the Lord opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw."

Who is the young man? He might be a young soldier, a young teacher, a young Civil Servant, a young mechanic, a young intellectual at the University. He thinks, perhaps, that there are no such things as chariots and horses of fire, or that, if there are any, they are tired and worn out, or even fighting on the wrong side.

Who was the young man in the story? He was more, he had gone a step further than many in the classes just mentioned. He was a prophet's assistant. But he was a

recruit, newly enrolled. For it would seem that he was not Gehazi. Gehazi had gone out from the presence of the prophet at the end of a dramatic episode, which has been called by Miss Naomi Royde-Smith "the best short story in the world," just before this. It occurs in the previous chapter (2 Kings v). There is, perhaps, significance in this. Gehazi, the servant who had been in effect a sort of Quisling, the man who had thought first and foremost of enriching himself and had betrayed the master's credit with the foreigner, had disappeared. A new servant had been engaged. It suggests the new spirit that inhabits very many of our young men and young women at this moment. There is plenty for it to contend with. The problems are large and formidable. A host with horses and chariots is round about the city. The young man has not yet tested his prophet. And remember the prophet is Elisha, not Elijah. He is not *of the old, heroic type, an unmistakable man of God*, as instantly recognisable as Bernard the Monk or Francis the Friar. He is Elisha, the prophet who, with the advance of what is called civilisation, has become smoother than Elijah. He is the prophet who lives among men, who frequents court, and camp, and market-place, and building-yard. He appears not in a rough mantle bound with a leather strap, but in modern dress, with a white collar. Is he the real thing?

The young man has not yet tested him. He does not yet know whether prophesying from such lips can deliver the goods. He is willing to serve, to co-operate. He will not desert. Rather than that, he would perish with the prophet, whose side he believes to be the right side. But is it the winning side? Are we really "more than conquerors through him that loved us?" Was it

true once, but since those days has lost its power? And is it true in Dothan, or in Galilee, or Corinth, but not now? Is it true of our hills, and our streets. Remember what Francis Thompson said:

See Christ walking on the water,
Not of Gennesareth, but Thames.

On our own hills, our Dartmoor, our Chilterns and our Cheviots, Brown Willy and Scawfell, on the Weald and the Wold and the Wirral, beside the Severn and the Trent, in Dorset, Lancashire and Suffolk, amid "the city's crowded clangour" and through "the homsteads and the woodlands," or even as men climb the prosaic, and very slight, acclivities of Ludgate Hill and Battersea Rise, there can be seen, by eyes that the Lord has opened, "chariots and horses of fire, round about Elisha." Can the Church of Christ do this? Yes, if by the Church of Christ is meant Christian forces, and if behind Christian forces is seen—Christ.

IV

The last element in the vision is the most momentous of all. It is freedom. That is vital. The Saviour of the world stands at the door and knocks, but by His own design the handle of the door is on the inside. There was an imperious note in "Follow me," addressed to Levi and the sons of Zebedee. There is an imperious note in "Draw near with faith and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort," or "Ye shall provide that he may learn the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments, in the vulgar tongue, and all other things which a Christian ought to know and believe to his soul's health." But there is in all these

torturer or a poisonous smell. Yet it is tragically true. All that burning patriotism, all that willingness to suffer hardships, all that magnificent organisation, twisted and corrupted in a strong and brave people who, by abandoning the desire for freedom, have sold themselves to work iniquity.

It may be thought that there is some freedom in it after all, that they have freely chosen to dispense with freedom, as a man does when he marries or goes into a monastery. But what is marriage? One of the fundamental universal things, to be numbered with birth and death as one of the three great possessions of mankind. The limitation involved in having only one wife is hardly less than the limitation involved in being only one man. And what is a religious vocation? It is a call from that which is super-human, Transcendent, Eternal, the only Authority which can rightly be called Totalitarian. Freedom may not be surrendered except to that which is either divine or universal. Nations which submit to be ruled absolutely by a dictator have prostituted their manhood and their womanhood for an idolatrous end. The glory of Germany, like the glory of Britain, is at all times a motive to be watched and suspected. When it takes the reins, and makes itself the sole arbiter of right and wrong, of duty and disobedience, it is diabolical.

The only Giver of true and perfect freedom is Christ. For freedom has two marks. It comes from above. It is independent of human cross-currents and complications. It will, of course, in its world-wide work encounter these phenomena, and it will have to make the best of them, using or resisting as may be right. But it comes out of a world which is above all that. Christ before

things the same condition as there was in the healing of Bartimæus: "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" St. Paul's affirmation: "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" seems to have the ring of something like Determinism, but there is one power that is not mentioned in his list, which can separate me even from that. It is my own will. In the last resort the elements of the picture are Christ, Others, and Myself. To an experienced and believing Churchman "Christ" will seem to include such things as Creed and Sacraments. Some will have a less institutional and, as they think, a less cumbered definition. Be it so. Let every man define and serve Christ as he finds Him. The elements of the picture will still be Christ, Others, and Myself.

The German people have rejected the idea of freedom. Not only have they imposed a cruel domination on the undestroyed remnants of the lands which they have overrun, but they have abandoned freedom for themselves. They have consented, with apparent willingness and with an unknown measure of secret humiliation and regret, to endure political, economic, social, and even domestic servitude. What for? In order that the greatness and might of Germany may be asserted. Even now, with all our experience of their methods, with the unprecedentedly strict discipline to which we ourselves have been driven by the stress of war, we can hardly understand it. A good-natured tolerance is so ingrained in us that we even now find it difficult to credit the thoroughness of German political education, and the truth of the stories of the Gestapo methods, especially the use of young children to spy upon their parents. From such things we recoil as we should from a child-

torturer or a poisonous smell. Yet it is tragically true. All that burning patriotism, all that willingness to suffer hardships, all that magnificent organisation, twisted and corrupted in a strong and brave people who, by abandoning the desire for freedom, have sold themselves to work iniquity.

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The only Giver of true and perfect freedom is Christ. For freedom has two marks. It comes from above. It is independent of human cross-currents and complications. It will, of course, in its world-wide work encounter these phenomena, and it will have to make the best of them, using or resisting as may be right. But it comes out of a world which is above all that. Christ before Pilate is bound in police-bonds and is accused by

human hatred. But His freedom is His own; it is that which God continually gives Him all the time. And the thing with which Christ enriches humanity is a franchise which earth-powers did not give and cannot take away. The Incarnation is the supreme, perpetual and irrevocable emancipation of our nature, our opportunity to become and, whatever happens, to remain "partakers of the divine nature." Freedom, as it is enjoyed by Britons, will have a British colour, an application to British life, but just as the Sacrament, ministered with the aid of the English language and shewing its fruits in the life which men live on their own soil, comes to us out of the eternal, so freedom is a star which had elsewhere its rising. It enables me to develop and it teaches me to be just and charitable, but it was born in the bosom of the Father when He said, "Let there be light."

The other mark of freedom is that it takes account of the fact that human beings are all different. Biologically, I am informed that the behaviour of chromosomes and genes is such that every individual is physically one combination out of seventeen million times seventeen million possibilities. Thus every human personality is "an Old Master," unique, irreplaceable. Very few minds, perhaps none at all, actually base their principles of living on considerations of this kind, though it is interesting to learn about them.¹ The vast majority of us are content to simply believe that everybody is worth

¹ Mr. L. A. Fenn, in *Democracy and Revolution* (1936) founded on these scientific facts an interesting argument for Democracy. Yet, as I took the liberty of saying in a Foreword which I wrote for his book "I am persuaded that his belief is mystical. The biological evidence which he has collected is of great interest and importance, but it seems to represent a subsequent process of rationalisation, and he is really a democrat because of something in his soul."

something and ought to be allowed to count as one. This faith could hardly be better expressed than it has been by Mr. Bernard Shaw:

We may all admire one another, enjoy one another, love one another, enter into all sorts of charming relations with one another, but all this is the mere luxury of human intercourse; behind it all, if it is to be really worth anything, there must be a certain deep and sacred respect for one another that we are free neither to give nor to withhold. It stands as an inexorable condition that we must not violate. It does not vary according to brains, or beauty, or artistic talent, or rank, or age, or education; and the difference between the wise of heart and the fool is nothing but the difference between the person who feels it and acknowledges it and the person who doesn't. It is the primal republican stuff out of which all true society is made.

This is fine, but what does it stand on? It stands, whether Mr. Shaw or any other person knows it or not, on the doctrine of the Incarnation. Westcott once said:

If we think, for example, what it is which calls out our lasting admiration for the warrior, the statesman, the artist, for the illustrious dead, who live in our memory for the sake of their gifts . . . types of character as widely removed as possible one from the other and from the features in which we figure to ourselves the Person of the Son of Man: I will dare to say that we shall discern in Him all the forces of faith—of faith in duty, in truth, in law—of self-control, of enthusiasm, of insight, by which the dead live: every tint which gives variety to the glories of earth brought together in the absolute unity of perfect light.¹

This may be criticised as no more than assertion, but there is historical evidence for its truth. Peter and Paul,

¹ *The Victory of the Cross*, p. 45.

only find that our faith had been confirmed. The claim of Christ would have been brought home to millions more in accents that they can understand.

There is something in all of us which is 'unique, characteristic, integral to self' This differs enormously, according to sex, nation, generation, temperament, capacity. But there is in Christ a universal quality which can reach every kind. It can "commend itself to every human conscience in the sight of God." All need emancipation, deliverance from the power of worldly conventions, fleshly weaknesses, the twin devils of pride and lying. All need freedom to be themselves, to be clothed upon as St. Paul puts it, with the full panoply of their divine vocation. It may be a vocation to live the life of a German or a Briton. It may demand as its principle expression intellectual concentration or physical endurance, high courage in action or patience during long suspense, the continual devout recollection of a consecrated Sister, or the good temper of a happy child. But always it is Christ emancipating a human *personality into its true selfhood*. *Ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free.*

Tertullian and Origen, Bede and Boniface, Alcuin and Charlemagne, Edward the Confessor and William the Conqueror, William of Wykeham and Richard Rolle, Chaucer and Langland, Cranmer and Pole, Andrewes and Bunyan, Wesley and Wilberforce, Newman and Shaftesbury, Gladstone and Browning, David Livingstone and Frank Weston, were men very different from one another. Yet all were Christians, most of them to the very fibre of their being. Add all the noble army of women, from Mary of Nazareth to Mary, the mother of "Private X, Reported missing," who have found in the Son of Man not merely the example but the Redemption of their own woman-life. It is the plain fact that Christ has stepped across the centuries and to this day bestrides the gulf which sunders ancient and modern. Human beings of every sort, old and young, cultured and simple, West and East, man and woman, have found in Him what they needed. There is no strain in this for us. It is easy, simple, natural. The miracle of adjustment is performed by the Holy Spirit in the invisible world. All we have to do is to be willing to be converted.

Just because faith is a divine creation and a divine gift, its permanence does not depend on what is done in any one quarter. If freedom failed, if Christianity failed in Britain, in Europe, the torch would still be alight not only in America, but in India, China and Africa. The "Young Churches" of the East have already taught us many lessons about our own religion. The hands that there hold the torch are less experienced than ours, but bolder and more vigorous. The tired though not irresolute eyes of European Christendom would know no jealousy if there arose an Indian Origen, a Chinese Augustine, an African Francis. We should

only find that our faith had been confirmed. The claim of Christ would have been brought home to millions more in accents that they can understand.

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